Lord Lyttleton

on

The Conversion of St. Paul

and

Gilbert West

on

The Resurrection of Christ

Central BAPTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

KANSAS CITY, KANSAS

-999c

LORD LYTTLETON, George, Lord

Observations on

THE CONVERSION OF ST. PAUL

and

GILBERT WEST, 1703-1756

Observations on

THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

TC
Apologetics
Paul. Conversion
Jesus Christ. Resurrection

AMERICAN TRACT SOCIETY,
7 WEST 45TH STREET
NEW YORK

1929

LIBRARY
CENTRAL BAPTIST SEMINARY

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2026

https://archive.org/details/lordlyttletononc0000unse

227.092
L996W

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

CONVERSION AND APOSTLESHIP OF SAINT PAUL.

IN A LETTER TO GILBERT WEST, ESQ.

SIR,

IN a late conversation we had together, upon the subject of the Christian Religion, I told you, that, besides all the proofs of it which may be drawn from the prophecies of the Old Testament, from the necessary connection it has with the whole system of the Jewish religion, from the miracles of Christ, and from the evidence given of his resurrection by all the other apostles, I thought the conversion and the apostleship of Saint Paul alone, duly considered, was of itself a demonstration sufficient to prove Christianity to be a Divine Revelation.

As you seemed to think that so compendious a proof might be of use to convince those unbelievers that will not attend to a longer series of arguments, I have thrown together the reasons upon which I support that proposition.

In the 26th chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, written by a contemporary author, and a companion of Saint Paul in preaching the gospel, (as appears by the book itself, chap. xx. ver. 6. 13, 14. chap. xxvii. ver. 1, &c.) Saint Paul is said to have himself given this account of his conversion and preaching to King Agrippa, and Festus, the Roman governor: "My manner of life, from my youth, which was at the first among mine own nation at Jerusalem, know all the Jews, which knew me from the beginning, (if they would testify,) that after the most straitest sect of our religion, I lived a Pharisee. And now I stand and am judged for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers: unto which promise our twelve tribes, instantly serving God day and night, hope to come: for which hope's sake, King Agrippa, I am accused of the Jews. Why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead? I verily thought with myself, that I ought to do many things contrary to the name of Jesus of Nazareth. Which thing I also did in Jerusalem, and many of the saints did I shut up in prison, having received authority from the chief priests; and when they were put to death I gave my voice against them. And I punished them oft in every synagogue, and compelled them to blaspheme: and being exceedingly mad against them, I persecuted them even unto strange cities. Whereupon, as I went to Damascus with authority and commission from the chief priests, at mid-day, O King, I saw in the way a light from heaven, above the brightness of the sun, shining round about me, and them which journeyed with me. And when we were all fallen to the earth, I heard a voice speaking unto me, and saying in the Hebrew tongue, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And I said, Who art thou, Lord? And he said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest. But rise, and stand upon thy feet, for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister, and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee, delivering thee from the people, and from the Gentiles, unto whom now I send thee, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and inheritance among them which are sanctified by faith that is in me. Whereupon, O King Agrippa, I was not disobedient unto the heavenly vision, but showed first unto them of Damascus, and at Jerusalem, and throughout all the coast of Judea, and then to the Gentiles, that they should repent and turn to God, and do works meet for repentance. For these causes the Jews caught me in the temple, and went about to kill me. Having therefore obtained help of God, I continue unto this day, witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come: that Christ should suffer; and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people, and to the Gentiles. And as he thus spake for himself, Festus said with a loud voice, Paul,

thou art beside thyself; much learning doth make thee mad. But he said, I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak forth the words of truth and soberness: For the King knoweth of these things, before whom also I speak freely: for I am persuaded that none of these things are hidden from him; for this thing was not done in a corner. King Agrippa, believest thou the prophets? I know that thou believest. Then Agrippa said unto Paul, Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian. And Paul said, I would to God that not only thou, but also all that hear me this day, were both almost and altogether such as I am, except these bonds."

In another chapter of the same book he gives in substance the same account to the Jews, adding these farther particulars: "And I said, What shall I do, Lord? And the Lord said unto me, Arise, and go into Damascus, and there it shall be told thee of all things which are appointed for thee to do. And when I could not see for the glory of that light, being led by the hand of them that were with me, I came into Damascus. And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood, and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight; and the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth. For thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now, why tarriest thou? Arise, and be baptized, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord." Acts xxii. 10—16.

In the 9th chapter of the same book, the author of it relates the same story, with some other circumstances not mentioned in these accounts: As, "that Saul in a vision saw Ananias," before he came to him, "coming in, and putting his hand on him that he might receive his sight:" Acts, ix. 12. And that when Ananias had spoken to him, "immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales," ver. 18.

And, agreeably to all these accounts, Saint Paul thus speaks of himself in the epistles he wrote to the several churches he planted; the authenticity of which cannot be doubted, without overturning all rules, by which the authority and genuineness of any writings can be proved or confirmed.

To the Galatians he says: "I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man. For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard of my conversation in time past in the Jews' religion, how that beyond measure I persecuted the church of God, and wasted it; and profited in the Jews' religion above many my equals in mine own nation, being more exceedingly zealous of the traditions of my fathers. But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, to reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen, immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood," &c. Gal. i. 11—16,

To the Philippians he says, "If any other man thinketh that he hath whereof he might trust in the flesh, I more: circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, an Hebrew of the Hebrews. As touching the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; touching the righteousness which is in the law, blameless. But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ." Phil. iii. 4 — 8.

And in his epistle to Timothy he writes thus: "I thank Christ Jesus our Lord, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry; who was before a blasphemer, and a persecutor, and injurious; but I obtained mercy, because I did it ignorantly in unbelief." 1 Tim. i. 12, 13.

In other epistles he calls himself "an Apostle by the will of God, by the commandment of God our Saviour, and Lord Jesus Christ; and an Apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead." 2 Cor. i. 1; Col. i. 1; 1 Tim. i. 1; Gal. i. 1. All which implies some miraculous call that made him an apostle. And to the Corinthians he says, after enumerating many appearances of Jesus after his resurrection, "and last of all he was seen of me also, as of one born out of due time," 1 Cor. xv. 8.

Now, it must of necessity be, that the person attesting these things of himself, and of whom they are related in so authentic a manner, either was an impostor, who said what he knew to be false with an intent to deceive: or he was an enthusiast who, by the force of an overheated imagination, imposed on himself; or he was deceived by the fraud of others, and all that he said must be imputed to the power of that deceit; or what he declared to have been the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen; and therefore the Christian religion is a Divine Revelation.

Now, that he was not an impostor, who said what he knew to be false with an intent to deceive, I shall endeavour to prove, by showing that he could have no rational motives to undertake such an imposture, nor

could have possibly carried it on with any success by the means we know he employed.

First, then, the inducement to such an imposture must have been one of these two, — either the hope of advancing himself by it in his temporal interest, credit, or power; or the gratification of some of his passions under the authority of it, and by the means it afforded.

Now, these were the circumstances in which Saint Paul declared his conversion to the faith of Christ Jesus, — That Jesus, who called himself the Messiah, and Son of God, notwithstanding the innocence and holiness of his life, notwithstanding the miracles by which he attested his mission, had been crucified by the Jews as an impostor and blasphemer; which crucifixion not only must (humanly speaking) have intimidated others from following him, or espousing his doctrines, but served to confirm the Jews in their opinion that he could not be their promised Messiah, who, according to all their prejudices, was not to suffer in any manner, but to reign triumphant for ever here upon earth.

His apostles, indeed, though at first they appeared to be terrified by the death of their Master, and disappointed in all their hopes, yet had surprisingly recovered their spirits again, and publicly taught in his name, declaring him to be risen from the grave, and confirming that miracle by many miracles they worked, or pretended to work, themselves. But the chief priests and rulers among the Jews were so far from being converted, either by their words or their works, that they had begun a severe persecution against them; put some to death, imprisoned others, and were going on with implacable rage against the whole sect. In all these severities Saint Paul concurred, being himself a Pharisee, bred up at the feet of Gamaliel, Acts, vii. 9. 22, 23, one of the chief of that sect: nor was he content, in the heat of his zeal, with persecuting the Christians who were at Jerusalem, but, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord, went unto the high priest, and desired of him letters to Damascus to the synagogues, that if he found any of this way, whether they were men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem," Acts, ix. 1, 2. His request was complied with, "and he went to Damascus with authority and commission from the high priests," Acts, xxvi. 12. At this instant of time, and under these circumstances, did he become a disciple of Christ. What could be his motives to take such a part? Was it the hope of increasing his wealth? The certain consequence of his taking that part, was not only the loss of all that he had, but of all hopes of acquiring more. Those whom he had left were the disposers of wealth, of dignity, of power, in Judea. Those whom he went to, were indigent men, oppressed and kept down from all means of improving their fortunes. They among them who had more than the rest, shared what they had with their brethren, but with this assistance the whole community was hardly supplied with the necessaries of life. And even in churches he afterwards planted himself, which were much more wealthy than that of Jerusalem, so far was Saint Paul from availing himself of their charity, or the veneration they had for him, in order to draw that wealth to himself, that he often refused to take any part of it for the necessaries of life.

Thus he tells the Corinthians, "Even unto this present hour, we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwelling-place; and labour, working with our own hands," 1 Cor. iv. 11, 12.

In another epistle he writes to them, "Behold, the third time I am ready to come to you, and I will not be burdensome to you, for I seek not yours, but you; for the children ought not to lay up for the parents, but the parents for the children," 2 Cor. xii. 14.

To the Thessalonians he says, "As we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts. For neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness, God is witness; nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome, as the apostles of Christ. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travail; for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the gospel of God," 1 Thess. ii. 4, 5, 6, 9. And again, in another letter to them, he repeats the same testimony of his disinterestedness: "Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought, but wrought with labour and travail night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you," 2 Thess. iii. 8. And when he took his farewell of the church of Ephesus, to whom he foretold that they should see him no more, he gives this testimony of himself, and appeals to them for the truth of it: "I have coveted no man's silver, or gold, or apparel. Yea, you yourselves know, that these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to them that were with me," Acts, xx. 33, 34. It is then evident, both from the state of the church when Saint Paul first came into it, and from his behaviour afterwards, that he had no thoughts of increasing his wealth by becoming a Christian; whereas, by continuing to be their enemy, he had almost certain hopes of making his fortune by the favour of those who were at the head of the Jewish state, to whom nothing could more recommend him than the zeal that he shewed in that persecution. As to credit or reputation, that too lay all on the side he

forsook. The sect he embraced was under the greatest and most universal contempt of any then in the world. The chiefs and leaders of it were men of the lowest birth, education, and rank. They had no one advantage of parts or learning, or other human endowments, to recommend them. The doctrines they taught were contrary to those which they who were accounted the wisest and the most knowing of their nation professed. The wonderful works that they did, were either imputed to magic or to imposture. The very Author and Head of their faith had been condemned as a criminal, and died on the cross between two thieves. Could the disciple of Gamaliel think he should gain any credit or reputation by becoming a teacher in a college of fishermen? Could he flatter himself, that either in or out of Judea, the doctrines he taught could do him any honour? No: he knew very well that the "preaching Christ crucified was a stumbling block to the Jews, and to the Greeks foolishness." He afterwards found by experience, that, in all parts of the world, contempt was the portion of whoever engaged in preaching a mystery so unpalatable to the world, to all its passions and pleasures, and so irreconcilable to the pride of human reason. "We are made," says he to the Corinthians, "as the filth of the world, the offscouring of all things unto this day." Yet he went on as zealously as he set out, and "was not ashamed of the gospel of Christ." Certainly, then, the desire of glory, the ambition of making to himself a great name, was not his motive to embrace Christianity, Was it then the love of power? Power! over whom? over a flock of sheep driven to the slaughter, whose Shepherd himself had been murdered a little before. All he could hope from that power, was to be marked out in a particular manner for the same knife which he had seen so bloodily drawn against them. Could he expect more mercy from the chief priests and the rulers, than they had shown to Jesus himself? Would not their anger be probably fiercer against the deserter and betrayer of their cause, than against any other of the apostles? Was power over so mean and despised a set of men worth the attempting with so much danger? But still it may be said, there are some natures so fond of power, that they will court it at any risk, and be pleased with it even over the meanest. Let us see then what power Saint Paul assumed over the Christians. Did he pretend to any superiority over the other apostles? No; he declared himself the least of them, 1 Cor. xv. 9. and less than the least of all saints, Eph. iii. 8. Even in the churches he himself planted, he never pretended to any primacy or power above the other apostles, nor would he be regarded any otherwise by them than as the instrument to them of the grace of God, and preacher of the gospel, not as the head of a sect. To the Corinthians he writes in these words: "Now this I say, that every one of you saith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ. Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Or were ye baptized in the name of Paul?" (1 Cor. i. 12, 13.) And in another place, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" (1 Cor. iii. 5.) "For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake," (2 Cor. iv. 5.)

All the authority he exercised over them was purely of a spiritual nature, tending to their instruction and edification, without any mixture of that civil dominion in which alone an impostor can find his account. Such was the dominion acquired and exercised, through the pretence of divine inspiration, by many ancient legislators, by Minos, Radamanthus, Triptolemus, Lycurgus, Numa, Zaleucus, Zoroaster, Xamolxis; nay, even by Pythagoras, who joined legislation to his philosophy, and, like the others, pretended to miracles and revelations from God, to give a more venerable sanction to the laws he prescribed.

Such, in later times, was attained by Odin among the Goths, by Mahomet among the Arabians, by Mango Capac among the Peruvians, by the Sofi family among the Persians, and that of the Xeriffs among the Moors. To such a dominion did also aspire the many false Messiahs among the Jews. In short, a spiritual authority was only desired as a foundation for temporal power, or as the support of it, by all these pretenders to divine inspirations, and others whom history mentions, in different ages and countries, to have used the same arts.

But St Paul innovated nothing in government or civil affairs, he meddled not with legislation, he formed no commonwealths, he raised no seditions, he affected no temporal power. Obedience to their rulers, (Romans, xiii.) was the doctrine he taught to the churches he planted, and what he taught he practised himself; nor did he use any of those soothing arts by which ambitious and cunning men recommend themselves to the favour of those whom they endeavour to subject to their power. Whatever was wrong in the disciples under his care, he freely reproved, as it became a teacher from God, of which numberless instances are to be found in all his epistles. And he was as careful of them when he had left them, as while he resided among them, which an impostor would hardly have been, whose ends were centred all in himself.

This is the manner in which he writes to the Philippians: "Wherefore, my beloved, as ye have always obeyed, not in my presence only, but now much more in my absence,

work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," (Phil. ii. 12.) And a little after he adds the cause why he interested himself so much in their conduct, "that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain. Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all," (Phil. ii. 15, 16, 17.) Are these the words of an impostor desiring nothing but temporal power? No: they are evidently written by one who looked beyond the bounds of this life. But it may be said, that he affected at least an absolute spiritual power over the churches he formed. I answer, "he preached Christ Jesus, and not himself." Christ was the "Head," he only the "minister," and for such only he gave himself to them. He called those who assisted him in preaching the gospel, his "fellow-labourers" and "fellow-servants."

So far was he from taking any advantage of a higher education, superior learning, and more use of the world, to claim to himself any supremacy above the other apostles, that he made light of all those attainments, and declared, "that he came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, but determined to know nothing among" those he converted, "save Jesus Christ and him crucified." And the reason he gave for it was, "that their faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. ii. 1, 2, 5.) Now this conduct put him quite on a level with the other apostles, who knew Jesus Christ as well as he, and had the power of God going along with their preaching in an equal degree of virtue and grace. But an impostor, whose aim had been power, would have acted a contrary part; he would have availed himself of all those advantages, he would have extolled them as highly as possible, he would have set up himself, by virtue of them, as head of that sect to which he acceded, or at least of the proselytes made by himself. This is no more than was done by every philosopher who formed a school; much more was it natural in one who propagated a new religion.

We see that the bishops of Rome have claimed to themselves a primacy, or rather a monarchy, over the whole Christian church. If Saint Paul had been actuated by the same lust of dominion, it was much easier for him to have succeeded in such an attempt. It was much easier for him to make himself head of a few poor mechanics and fishermen, whose superior he had always been in the eyes of the world, than for the bishops of Rome to reduce those of Ravenna or Milan, and other great metropolitans, to their obedience.

Besides the opposition they met with from such potent antagonists, they were obliged to support their pretensions in direct contradiction to those very Scriptures which they were forced to ground them upon, and to the indisputable practice of the whole Christian church for many centuries. These were such difficulties as required the utmost abilities and skill to surmount. But the first preachers of the gospel had easier means to corrupt a faith not yet fully known, and which in many places could only be known by what they severally published themselves. It was necessary, indeed, while they continued together, and taught the same people, that they should agree, otherwise the credit of their sect would have been overthrown; but when they separated and formed different churches in distant countries, the same necessity no longer remained.

It was in the power of Saint Paul to model most of the churches he formed, so as to favour his own ambition: for he preached the gospel in parts of the world where no other apostles had been, "where Christ was not named" till he brought the knowledge of him, avoiding "to build upon another man's foundation," (Rom. xv. 20.) Now, had he been an impostor, would he have confined himself to just the same gospel as was delivered by the other apostles, where he had such a latitude to preach what he pleased without contradiction? Would he not have twisted and warped the doctrines of Christ to his own ends, to the particular use and expediency of his own followers, and to the peculiar support and increase of his own power?

That this was not done by Saint Paul, or by any other of the apostles, in so many various parts of the world as they travelled into, and in churches absolutely under their own direction; that the gospel preached by them all should be one and the same,[1] the doctrines

[1] If any one imagine that he sees any difference between the doctrines of Saint James and Saint Paul, concerning justification by faith or by works, let him read Mr Locke's excellent comment upon the Epistles of the latter: or let him only consider these words in the First Epistle to the Corinthians, ix 27, "But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away."

If Saint Paul had believed or taught, that faith without works was sufficient to save a disciple of Christ, to what purpose did he keep under his body, since his salvation was not to depend upon that being subjected to the power of his reason, but merely upon the faith he professed? His faith was firm, and so strongly founded upon the most certain conviction, that he had no reason to doubt its continuance; how could he then think it possible, that while he retained the saving faith, he might nevertheless be a cast-away? Or if he had supposed that his election and calling was of such a nature, as that it irresistibly impelled him to good and restrained him from evil, how could he express any fear, lest the lust of his body should prevent his salvation? Can such an apprehension be made to agree with the notions of absolute predestination ascribed by some to Saint Paul? He could have no doubt that the grace of God had been given to him in the most extraordinary manner; yet we see that he thought his election was not so certain, but that he might fall from it again through the natural prevalence of bodily appetites, if not duly restrained by his own voluntary care. This single passage is a full answer, out

agreeing in every particular, without any one of them attributing more to himself than he did to the others, or establishing any thing even in point of order or discipline different from the rest, or more advantageous to his own interest, credit, or power,—is a most strong and convincing proof of their not being impostors, but acting entirely by divine inspiration.

If, then, it appears that Saint Paul had nothing to gain by taking this part, let us consider, on the other hand, what he gave up, and what he had reason to fear. He gave up a fortune which he was in a fair way of advancing. He gave up that reputation which he had acquired by the labours and studies of his whole life, and by a behaviour which had been blameless, "touching the righteousness which is in the law," (Phil. iii. 6.) He gave up his friends, his relations, and family, from whom he estranged and banished himself for life. He gave up that religion "which he had profited in above many his equals in his own nation, and those traditions of his fathers, which he had been more exceedingly zealous of," (Gal. i. 14.) How hard this sacrifice was to a man of his warm temper, and above all men to a Jew, is worth consideration. That nation is known to have been more tenacious of their religious opinions, than any other upon the face of the earth. The strictest and proudest sect among them was that of the Pharisees, under whose discipline Saint Paul was bred. The departing, therefore, so suddenly from their favourite tenets, renouncing their pride, and from their disciple becoming their adversary, was a most difficult effort for one to make so nursed up in the esteem of them, and whose early prejudices were so strongly confirmed, by all the power of habit, all the authority of example, and all the allurements of honour and interest. These were the sacrifices he had to make in becoming a Christian. Let us now see what inconveniences he had to fear: The implacable vengeance of those he deserted; that sort of contempt which is hardest to bear, the contempt of those whose good opinion he had most eagerly sought; and all those other complicated evils which he describes in his Second Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xi.; evils, the least of which were enough to have frighted any impostor, even from the most hopeful and profitable cheat. But where the advantage proposed bears no proportion to the dangers incurred, or the mischiefs endured, he must be absolutely out of his senses who will either engage in an imposture, or, being engaged, persevere.

Upon the whole, then, I think I have proved, that the desire of wealth, of fame, or of power, could be no motive to make Saint Paul a convert to Christ; but that, on the contrary, he must have been checked by that desire, as well as by the just apprehension of many inevitable and insupportable evils, from taking a part so contradictory to his past life, to all the principles he had imbibed, and all the habits he had contracted. It only remains to be inquired, whether the gratification of any other passion, under the authority of that religion, or by the means it afforded, could be his inducement.

Now, that there have been some impostors who have pretended to revelations from God, merely to give a loose to irregular passions, and set themselves free from all restraints of government, law, or morality, both ancient and modern history shows. But the doctrine preached by Saint Paul is absolutely contrary to all such designs. His writings breathe nothing but the strictest morality, obedience to magistrates, order, and government, with the utmost abhorrence of all licentiousness, idleness, or loose behaviour, under the cloak of religion.[2] We nowhere read in his works that saints are above moral ordinances; that dominion, or property, is founded in grace; that there is no difference in moral actions; that any impulses of the mind are to direct us against the light of our reason and the laws of nature: or any of those wicked tenets from which the peace of society has been disturbed, and the rules of morality have been broken, by men pretending to act under the sanction of a divine revelation. Nor does any part of his life, either before or after his conversion to Christianity, bear any mark of a libertine disposition. As among the Jews, so among the Christians, his conversation and manners were blameless. Hear the appeal that he makes to the Thessalonians upon his doctrine and behaviour among them: "Our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblamably, we behaved ourselves among you that believe," (1 Thess. ii. 3, 10.[3]) And to the Corinthians he says, "We have wronged no man, we have corrupted no man, we have defrauded no man," (2 Cor. vii. 2.)

It was not, then, the desire of gratifying any irregular passion, that could induce Saint Paul to turn Christian, any more than the hope of advancing himself either in wealth, or reputation, or power. But still it is possible, some

of the mouth of Saint Paul himself, to all the mistakes that have been made of his meaning in some obscure expressions concerning grace, election, and justification.

[2] See particularly Rom. xi. and xiii.; Col. iii.; and also 2 Cor. i. 12. and iv. 2.

[3] If Saint Paul had held any secret doctrines, or *esoterick*, (as the philosophers called them,) we should have probably found them in the letters he wrote to Timothy, Titus, and Philemon, his bosom friends and disciples. But both the theological and moral doctrines are exactly the same in them as those he wrote to the churches. A very strong presumptive proof of his being no impostor! Surely, had he been one, he would have given some hints in these private letters of the cheat they were carrying on, and some secret directions to turn it to some worldly purposes of one kind or another. But no such thing is to be found in any one of them. The same disinterested, holy, and divine spirit, breathes in all these as in the other more public epistles.

men may say, (and I would leave no imaginable objection unanswered,) that though Saint Paul could have no selfish or interested view in undertaking such an imposture, yet, for the sake of its moral doctrines, he might be inclined to support the Christian faith, and make use of some pious frauds, to advance a religion which, though erroneous and false in its theological tenets, and in the facts upon which it was grounded, was in its precepts and influence beneficial to mankind.

Now it is true, that some good men in the Heathen world have both pretended to divine revelations, and introduced or supported religions they knew to be false, under a notion of public utility: but besides that this practice was built upon maxims disclaimed by the Jews, (who, looking upon truth, not utility, to be the basis of their religion, abhorred all such frauds, and thought them injurious to the honour of God,) the circumstances they acted in were very different from those of Saint Paul.

The first reformers of savage, uncivilized nations, had no other way to tame those barbarous people, and bring them to submit to order and government, but by the reverence which they acquired from this pretence. The fraud was therefore alike beneficial both to the deceiver and the deceived. And in all other instances which can be given of good men acting this part, they not only did it to serve good ends, but were secure of its doing no harm. Thus, when Lycurgus persuaded the Spartans, or Numa the Romans, that the laws of the one were inspired by Apollo, or those of the other by Egeria; when they taught their people to put great faith in oracles, or in augury, no temporal mischief, either to them or their people, could attend the reception of that belief. It drew on no persecutions, no enmity with the world. But at the time when Saint Paul undertook the preaching of the gospel, to persuade any man to be a Christian, was to persuade him to expose himself to all the calamities human nature could suffer. This Saint Paul knew; this he not only expected, but warned those he taught to look for it too, (1 Thess. iii. 4; 2 Cor. vi. 4, 5; Eph. vi. 10—16; Phil. i. 28—30; Col. i. 9—11; Rom. viii. 35, 36.) The only support that he had himself, or gave to them, was, "That if they suffered with Christ, they should be also glorified together." And that he "reckoned that the sufferings of the present time were not worthy to be compared with that glory," (Rom. viii. 17, 18.) So likewise he writes to the Thessalonians, "We ourselves glory in you, in the churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that you endure; which is a manifest token of the righteous judgment of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the kingdom of God, for which also ye suffer. Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense [or pay] tribulation to them that trouble you; and, to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels," &c. (2 Thess. i. 4, 5, 6, 7.) And to the Corinthians he says, "If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable." How much reason he had to say this, the hatred, the contempt, the torments, the deaths endured by the Christians in that age, and long afterwards, abundantly prove. Whoever professed the gospel under these circumstances, without an entire conviction of its being a divine revelation, must have been mad; and if he made others profess it by fraud or deceit, he must have been worse than mad—he must have been the most hardened wretch that ever breathed. Could any man who had in his nature the least spark of humanity, subject his fellow-creatures to so many miseries; or could one that had in his mind the least ray of reason, expose himself to share them with those he deceived, in order to advance a religion which he knew to be false, merely for the sake of its moral doctrines? Such an extravagance is too absurd to be supposed; and I dwell too long on a notion that, upon a little reflection, confutes itself.

To the other proofs I have given, that Saint Paul could have no rational motive to become a disciple of Christ, unless he sincerely believed in him, I would only add this observation, That whereas it may be objected to the other apostles, by those who are resolved not to credit their testimony, that having been deeply engaged with Jesus during his life, they were obliged to continue the same professions after his death, for the support of their own credit, and from having gone too far to go back, this can by no means be said of Saint Paul. On the contrary, whatever force there may be in that way of reasoning, it all tends to convince us, that Saint Paul must naturally have continued a Jew, and an enemy of Christ Jesus. If they were engaged on one side, he was as strongly engaged on the other. If shame withheld them from changing sides, much more ought it to have stopt him, who being of a much higher education and rank in life than they, had more credit to lose, and must be supposed to have been vastly more sensible to that sort of shame. The only difference was, that they, by quiting their Master after his death, might have preserved themselves; whereas he, by quitting the Jews, and taking up the cross of Christ, certainly brought on his own destruction.

As therefore no rational motive appears for Saint Paul's embracing the faith of Christ, without having been really convinced of the truth of it, but on the contrary every thing

concurred to deter him from acting that part, one might very justly conclude, that when a man of his understanding embraced that faith, he was in reality convinced of the truth of it, and that, by consequence, he was not an impostor, who said what he knew to be false, with an intent to deceive.

But, that no shadow of doubt may remain upon the impossibility of his having been such an impostor; that it may not be said, The minds of men are sometimes so capricious, that they will act without any rational motives, they know not why, and so perhaps might Saint Paul; I shall next endeavour to prove, that if he had been so unaccountably wild and absurd as to undertake an imposture so unprofitable and dangerous both to himself and those he deceived by it, he could not possibly have carried it on with any success, by the means we know he employed.

First, then, let me observe, that if his conversion, and the part that he acted in consequence of it, was an imposture, it was such an imposture as could not be carried on by one man alone. The faith he professed, and which he became an apostle of, was not his invention. He was not the author and beginner of it, and therefore it was not in his power to draw the doctrines of it out of his own imagination. With Jesus, who was the author and head of it, he had never had any communication before his death, nor with his apostles after his death, except as their persecutor.

As he took on himself the office and character of an apostle, it was absolutely necessary for him to have a precise and perfect knowledge of all the facts contained in the gospel, several of which had only passed between Jesus himself and his twelve apostles, and others more privately still, so that they could be known but to very few, being not yet made public by any writings; otherwise he would have exposed himself to ridicule among those who preached that gospel with more knowledge than he: and as the testimony they bore would have been different in point of fact, and many of their doctrines and interpretations of Scripture repugnant to his, from their entire disagreement with those Jewish opinions in which he was bred up; either they must have been forced to ruin his credit, or he would have ruined theirs. Some general notions he might have gained of these matters from the Christians he persecuted, but not exact or extensive enough to qualify him for an apostle, whom the least error in these points would have disgraced, and who must have been ruined by it in all his pretensions to that inspiration, from whence the apostolical authority was chiefly derived.

It was therefore impossible for him to act this part but in confederacy at least with the apostles. Such a confederacy was still more necessary for him, as the undertaking to preach the gospel did not only require an exact and particular knowledge of all it contained, but an apparent power of working miracles; for to such a power all the apostles appealed in proof of their mission and of the doctrines they preached. He was therefore to learn of them by what secret arts they so imposed on the senses of men, if this power was a cheat. But how could he gain these men to become his confederates? Was it by furiously persecuting them and their brethren, as we find that he did, to the very moment of his conversion? Would they venture to trust their capital enemy with all the secrets of their imposture, with those upon which all their hopes and credit depended? Would they put it in his power to take away not only their lives, but the honour of their sect, which they preferred to their lives, by so ill-placed a confidence? Would men be so secret as not to be drawn by the most severe persecutions to say one word which could convict them of being impostors, confess themselves such to their persecutor, in hopes of his being their accomplice? This is still more impossible than that he should attempt to engage in their fraud without their consent and assistance.

We must suppose, then, that till he came to Damascus, he had no communication with the apostles, acted in no concert with them, and learned nothing from them except the doctrines which they had publicly taught to all the world. When he came there, he told the Jews to whom he brought letters from the high-priest and the synagogue against the Christians,[4] of his having seen in the way a great light from heaven, and heard Christ Jesus reproaching him with his persecution, and commanding him to go into the city, where it should be told him what he was to do. But to account for his choosing this method of declaring himself a convert to Christ, we must suppose that all those who were with him when he pretended he had his vision were his accomplices; otherwise the story he told could have gained no belief, being contradicted by them whose testimony was necessary to vouch for the truth of it. And yet, how can we suppose that all these men should be willing to join in this imposture? They were probably officers of justice or soldiers, who had been employed often before in executing the orders of the high-priest and the rulers against the Christians. Or if they were chosen particularly for this expedition, they must have been chosen by them as men they could trust for their zeal in that cause. What should induce them to the betraying that business they were employed in? Does it even appear that they had any

[4] The disciples of Christ were not called Christians till after this time; but I use the name as most familiar to us, and to avoid circumlocution.

connection with the man they so lied for, before or after this time, or any reward from him for it? This is therefore a difficulty in the first outset of this imposture, not to be overcome.

But farther, he was to be instructed by one at Damascus. That instructor therefore must have been his accomplice, though they appear to be absolute strangers to one another, and though he was a man of an excellent character, who had a good report of all the Jews that dwelt at Damascus, and so was very unlikely to have engaged in such an imposture. Notwithstanding these improbabilities, this man, I say, must have been his confidant and accomplice in carrying on this wicked fraud, and the whole matter must have been previously agreed on between them. But here again the same objection occurs: How could this man venture to act such a dangerous part without the consent of the other disciples, especially of the apostles? or by what means could he obtain their consent? And how absurdly did they contrive their business, to make the conversion of Saul the effect of a miracle, which all those that were with him must certify did never happen? How much easier would it have been to have made him be present at some pretended miracle wrought by the disciples, or by Ananias himself, when none were able to discover the fraud, and have imputed his conversion to that, or to the arguments used by some of his prisoners, whom he might have discoursed with, and questioned about their faith, and the grounds of it, in order to colour his intended conversion.

As this was the safest, so it was the most natural method of bringing about such a change; instead of ascribing it to an event which lay so open to detection. For (to use the words of Saint Paul to Agrippa) "this thing was not done in a corner," (Acts, xxvi. 26,) but in the eye of the world, and subject immediately to the examination of those who would be most strict in searching into the truth of it, the Jews at Damascus. Had they been able to bring any shadow of proof to convict him of fraud in this affair, his whole scheme of imposture must have been nipt in the bud. Nor were they at Jerusalem, whose commission he bore, less concerned to discover so provoking a cheat. But we find, that many years afterwards, when they had all the time and means they could desire to make the strictest inquiry, he was bold enough to appeal to Agrippa in the presence of Festus, upon his own knowledge of the truth of his story, who did not contradict him, though he had certainly heard all that the Jews could allege against the credit of it in any particular, (Acts, xxvi. 26;) a very remarkable proof both of the notoriety of the fact, and the integrity of the man, who with so fearless a confidence could call upon a king to give testimony for him, even while he was sitting in judgment upon him.

But to return to Ananias.—Is it not strange, if this story had been an imposture, and he had been joined with Paul in carrying it on, that after their meeting at Damascus we never should hear of their consorting together, or acting in concert; or that the former drew any benefit from the friendship of the latter, when he became so considerable among the Christians? Did Ananias engage and continue in such a dangerous fraud without any hope or desire of private advantage? Or was it safe for Paul to shake him off, and risk his resentment? There is, I think, no other way to get over this difficulty, but by supposing that Ananias happened to die soon after the other's conversion. Let us then take that for granted, without any authority either of history or tradition, and let us see in what manner this wondrous imposture was carried on by Paul himself.—His first care ought to have been to get himself owned and received as an apostle by the apostles. Till this was done, the bottom he stood upon was very narrow, nor could he have any probable means of supporting himself in any esteem or credit among the disciples. Intruders into impostures run double risks; they are in danger of being detected, not only by those upon whom they intend to practise their cheats, but also by those whose society they force themselves into, who must always be jealous of such an intrusion, and much more from one who had always before behaved as their enemy. Therefore, to gain the apostles, and bring them to admit him into a participation of all their mysteries, all their designs, and all their authority, was absolutely necessary at this time to Paul. The least delay was of dangerous consequence, and might expose him to such inconveniences as he never afterwards could overcome. But instead of attending to this necessity, he went into Arabia, and then returned again to Damascus; nor did he go to Jerusalem till three years were past, (Gal. i. 17, 18.)

Now this conduct may be accounted for, if it be true that (as he declares in his Epistle to the Galatians) "he neither received the gospel of any man, neither was he taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ," (Gal. i. 12.) Under such a Master, and with the assistance of his divine power, he might go on boldly without any human associates; but an impostor, so left to himself, so deprived of all help, all support, all recommendation, could not have succeeded.

Farther; we find that at Antioch he was not afraid to "withstand Peter to his face, and even to reprove him before all the disciples, because he was to be blamed," (Gal. ii. 11—14.) If he was an impostor, how could

ıe venture to offend that apostle whom it so highly concerned him to agree with and please? Accomplices in a fraud are obliged to show greater regards to each other: such freedom belongs to truth alone.

But let us consider what difficulties he had to encounter among the Gentiles themselves, in the enterprise he undertook of going to them, making himself their apostle, and converting them to the religion of Christ. As this undertaking was the distinguishing part of his apostolical functions, that which, in the language of his epistles, he was particularly called to, or which, to speak like an unbeliever, he chose and assigned to himself, it deserves a particular consideration: but I shall only touch the principal points of it as concisely as I can, because you have in a great measure exhausted the subject in your late excellent book on the Resurrection, where you discourse with such strength of reason and eloquence upon the difficulties that opposed the propagation of the Christian religion in all parts of the world.

Now in this enterprise Saint Paul was to contend, 1*st*, With the policy and power of the magistrates; 2*dly*, With the interest, credit, and craft of the priests; 3*dly*, With the prejudices and passions of the people; 4*thly*, With the wisdom and pride of the philosophers.

That in all heathen countries the established religion was interwoven with their civil constitution, and supported by the magistrates as an essential part of the government, whoever has any acquaintance with antiquity cannot but know. They tolerated indeed many different worships, (though not with so entire a latitude as some people suppose,) and they suffered men to discourse very freely concerning religion, provided they would submit to an exterior conformity with the established rites: nay, according to the genius of Paganism, which allowed an intercommunity of worship, they in most places admitted, without any great difficulty, new gods and new rites; but they no where endured any attempt to overturn the established religion, or any direct opposition made to it, esteeming that an unpardonable offence, not to the gods alone, but to the state. This was so universal a notion, and so constant a maxim of heathen policy, that when the Christian religion set itself up in opposition to all other religions, admitted no intercommunity with them, but declared that the gods of the Gentiles were not to be worshipped, nor any society suffered between them and the only true God; when this new doctrine began to be propagated, and made such a progress as to fall under the notice of the magistrate, the civil power was every where armed with all its terrors against it. When, therefore, Saint Paul undertook the conversion of the Gentiles, he knew very well that the most severe persecutions must be the consequence of any success in his design.

Secondly, This danger was rendered more certain by the opposition he was to expect from the interest, credit, and craft of the priests. How gainful a trade they, with all their inferior dependents, made of those superstitions which he proposed to destroy; how much credit they had with the people, as well as the state, by the means of them; and how much craft they employed in carrying on their impostures, all history shows. Saint Paul could not doubt that all these men would exert their utmost abilities to stop the spreading of the doctrines he preached, doctrines which struck at the root of their power and gain, and were much more terrible to them than those of the most atheistical sect of philosophers, because the latter contented themselves with denying their principles, but at the same time declared for supporting their practices, as useful cheats, or at least acquiesced in them as establishments authorized by the sanction of law. Whatever therefore their cunning could do to support their own worship, whatever aid they could draw from the magistrate, whatever zeal they could raise in the people, Saint Paul was to contend with, unsupported by any human assistance.

And, *Thirdly*, This he was to do in direct opposition to all the prejudices and passions of the people. Now, had he confined his preaching to Judea alone, this difficulty would not have occurred in near so great a degree. The people there were so moved by the miracles the apostles had wrought, as well as by the memory of those done by Jesus, that, in spite of their rulers, they began to be favourably disposed towards them, (Acts, iv. 21; v. 26;) and we even find that the high-priest and the council had more than once been withheld from treating the apostles with so much severity as they desired to do, for fear of the people. But in the people among the Gentiles no such dispositions could be expected: Their prejudices were violent, not only in favour of their own superstitions, but in a particular manner against any doctrines taught by a Jew. As, from their aversion to all idolatry, and irreconcilable separation from all other religions, the Jews were accused of hating mankind, so were they hated by all other nations; nor were they hated alone, but despised. To what a degree that contempt was carried, appears as well by the mention made of them in heathen authors, as by the complaints Josephus makes of the unreasonableness and injustice of it in his Apology. What authority then could Saint Paul flatter himself that his preaching would carry along with it, among people to whom he was at once both the object of national hatred and national scorn? But besides this popular prejudice against a Jew, the doctrines he

taught were such as shocked all their most ingrafted religious opinions. They agreed to no principles, of which he could avail himself to procure their assent to the other parts of the Gospel he preached. To convert the Jews to Christ Jesus, he was able to argue from their own Scriptures, upon the authority of books which they owned to contain divine revelations, and from which he could clearly convince them that Jesus was the very Christ. But all these ideas were new to the Gentiles; they expected no Christ, (Acts, ix. 22;) they allowed no such Scriptures,; they were to be taught the Old Testament as well as the new. How was this to be done by a man not even authorized by his own nation? opposed by those who were greatest, and thought wisest among them? either quite single, or only attended by one or two more, under the same disadvantages, and even of less consideration than he?

The light of nature, indeed, without express revelation, might have conducted the Gentiles to the knowledge of one God, the Creator of all things, (Acts, xiv. 17; xvii. 27, 28;) and to that light Saint Paul might appeal, as we find that he did. But clear as it was, they had almost put it out by their superstitions, "having changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things, and serving the creature more than the Creator," (Rom. i. 23, 25.) And to this idolatry they were strongly attached, not by their prejudices alone, but by their passions, which were flattered and gratified in it, as they believed that their deities would be rendered propitious, not by virtue and holiness, but by offerings, and incense, and outward rites; rites which dazzled their senses by magnificent shows, and allured them by pleasures often of a very impure and immoral nature. Instead of all this, the Gospel proposed to them no other terms of acceptance with God but a worship of him in spirit and truth, sincere repentance, and perfect submission to the divine laws, the strictest purity of life and manners, and renouncing of all those lusts in which they had formerly walked. How unpalatable a doctrine was this to men so given up to the power of those lusts, as the whole heathen world was at that time! If their philosophers could be brought to approve it, there could be no hope that the people would relish it, or exchange the ease and indulgence which those religions they were bred up in allowed to their appetites, for one so harsh and severe. But might not Saint Paul, in order to gain them, relax that severity? He might have done so, no doubt, and probably would, if he had been an impostor; but it appears by all his epistles, that he preached it as purely, and enjoined it as strongly, as Jesus himself.

But supposing they might be persuaded to quit their habitual sensuality for the purity of the Gospel, and to forsake their idolatries, which Saint Paul reckons amongst the works of the flesh, (Gal. v. 19, 20,) for the spiritual worship of the one invisible God, how were they disposed to receive the doctrine of the salvation of man by the cross of Jesus Christ? Could they, who were bred in notions so contrary to that "great mystery, to that hidden wisdom of God which none of the princes of this world knew," (1 Cor. i. 7, 8,) incline to receive it against the instructions of all their teachers and the example of all their superiors? Could they, whose gods had almost all been powerful kings, and mighty conquerors; they, who at that very time paid divine honours to the emperors of Rome, whose only title to deification was the imperial power; could they, I say, reconcile their ideas to a crucified Son of God, to a Redeemer of mankind on the cross? Would they look there for him, "who is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of every creature; by whom, and for whom, were all things created that are in heaven, and that are on earth, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers?" (Col. i. 15, 16.) No, most surely; the natural man (to speak in the words of Saint Paul) "receiveth not these things, for they are foolishness to him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned," (1 Cor. ii. 14.) I may therefore conclude, that in the enterprise of converting the Gentiles, Saint Paul was to contend not only with the policy and power of the magistrates, and with the interest, credit, and craft of the priests; but also with the prejudices and passions of the people.

I am next to show, that he was to expect no less opposition from the wisdom and pride of the philosophers. And though some may imagine, that men who pretended to be raised and refined above vulgar prejudices and vulgar passions, would have been helpful to him in his design, it will be found upon examination, that, instead of assisting or befriending the Gospel, they were its worst and most irreconcilable enemies. For they had prejudices of their own still more repugnant to the doctrines of Christ than those of the vulgar; more deeply rooted, and more obstinately fixed in their minds. The wisdom upon which they valued themselves, chiefly consisted in vain metaphysical speculations, in logical subtleties, in endless disputes, in high-flown conceits of the perfection and self-sufficiency of human wisdom, in dogmatical positiveness about doubtful opinions, or sceptical doubts about the most clear and certain truths. It must appear at first sight, that nothing could be more contradictory to the first principles of the Christian religion, than those of the atheistical or sceptical sects, which at that

time prevailed very much, both among the Greeks and the Romans; nor shall we find that the theistical sects were much less at enmity with it, when we consider the doctrines they held upon the nature of God and the soul.

But I will not enlarge on a subject which the most learned Mr Warburton has handled so well.[5] If it were necessary to enter particularly into this argument, I could easily prove, that there was not one of all the different philosophical sects then upon earth, not even the Platonics themselves, who are thought to favour it most, that did not maintain some opinions fundamentally contrary to those of the Gospel. And in this they all agreed, to explode, as most unphilosophical, and contrary to every notion that any among them maintained, that great article of the Christian religion, upon which the foundations of it are laid, and without which Saint Paul declares to his proselytes their faith would be vain, (1 Cor. xv. 17—20,) the resurrection of the dead with their bodies, of which resurrection Christ was the first-born, (Col. i. 18.) Besides the contrariety of their tenets to those of the Gospel, the pride that was common to all the philosophers was of itself an almost invincible obstacle against the admission of the evangelical doctrines, calculated to humble that pride, and teach them, that professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, (Rom. i. 22.) This pride was no less intractable, no less averse to the instructions of Christ, or of his apostles, than that of the Scribes and Pharisees. Saint Paul was therefore to contend, in his enterprise of converting the Gentiles, with all the opposition that could be made to it by all the different sects of philosophers. And how formidable an opposition this was, let those consider who are acquainted from history with the great credit these sects had obtained at that time in the world—a credit even superior to that of the priests. Whoever pretended to learning or virtue was their disciple; the greatest magistrates, generals, kings, ranged themselves under their discipline, were trained up in their schools, and professed the opinions they taught.

All these sects made it a maxim, not to disturb the popular worship, or established religion; but, under those limitations, they taught very freely whatever they pleased, and no religious opinions were more warmly supported than those they delivered were by their followers. The Christian religion at once overturned their several systems, taught a morality more perfect than theirs, and established it upon higher and much stronger foundations, mortified their pride, confounded their learning, discovered their ignorance ruined their credit. Against such an enemy what would they not do? Would they not exert the whole power of their rhetoric, the whole art of their logic, their influence over the people, their interest with the great, to discredit a novelty so alarming to them all? If Saint Paul had had nothing to trust to but his own natural faculties, his own understanding, knowledge, and eloquence, could he have hoped to be singly a match for all theirs united against him? Could a teacher unheard of before, from an obscure and unlearned part of the world, have withstood the authority of Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Zeno, Arcesilaüs, Carneades, all the great names which held the first rank of human wisdom? He might as well have attempted alone, or with the help of Barnabas and Silas, of Timotheus and Titus, to have erected a monarchy upon the ruins of all the several states then in the world, as to have erected Christianity upon the destruction of all the several sects of philosophy which reigned in the minds of the Gentiles among whom he preached, particularly the Greeks and the Romans.

Having thus proved (as I think) that, in the work of converting the Gentiles, Saint Paul could have no assistance, but was sure on the contrary of the utmost repugnance and opposition to it imaginable, from the magistrates, from the priests, from the people, and from the philosophers; it necessarily follows, that to succeed in that work he must have called in some extraordinary aid, some stronger power than that of reason and argument. Accordingly we find he tells the Corinthians, "that his speech and preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom but in demonstration of the spirit and of power," (1 Cor. ii. 4.) And to the Thessalonians he says, "Our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Ghost," (1 Thess. i. 5.) It was to the efficacy of the divine power that he ascribed all his success in those countries, and wherever else he planted the Gospel of Christ. If that power really went with him, it would enable him to overcome all those difficulties that obstructed his enterprise; but then he was not an impostor: Our inquiry therefore must be, Whether (supposing him to have been an impostor) he could, by pretending to miracles, have overcome all those difficulties, and carried on this work with success?

Now, to give miracles, falsely pretended to, any reputation, two circumstances are principally necessary—an apt disposition in those whom they are designed to impose upon, and a powerful confederacy to carry on and abet the cheat. Both these circumstances, or at least one of them, have always accompanied all the false miracles, ancient and modern, which have obtained any credit among man-

[5] See the Divine Legation of Moses, l. iii. See also a late pamphlet, entitled, "A Critical Inquiry into the Opinions and Practice of the ancient Philosophers, concerning the Nature of the Soul and a Future State."

kind. To both these was owing the general faith of the heathen world in oracles, auspices, auguries, and other impostures, by which the priests, combined with the magistrates, supported the national worship, and deluded a people prepossessed in their favour, and willing to be deceived. Both the same causes likewise co-operate in the belief that is given to Popish miracles among those of their own Church. But neither of these assisted Saint Paul. What prepossessions could there have been in the minds of the Gentiles, either in favour of him, or the doctrines he taught? Or rather, what prepossessions could be stronger than those which they undoubtedly had against both? If he had remained in Judea, it might have been suggested by unbelievers, that the Jews were a credulous people, apt to seek after miracles, and to afford them an easy belief; and that the fame of those said to be done by Jesus himself, and by his apostles, before Paul declared his conversion, had predisposed their minds, and warmed their imaginations to the admission of others supposed to be wrought by the same power.

The signal miracle of the apostles speaking with tongues on the day of Pentecost, had made three thousand converts; that of healing the lame man at the gate of the temple, five thousand more, (Acts, ii. 41; iv. 4.) Nay, such was the faith of the multitude, that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at the least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them, (Acts, v. 15.) Here was therefore a good foundation laid for Paul to proceed upon in pretending to similar miraculous works: though the priests and the rulers were hardened against them, the people were inclined to give credit to them, and there was reason to hope for success among them, both at Jerusalem and in all the regions belonging to the Jews. But no such dispositions were to be found in the Gentiles. There was among them no matter prepared for imposture to work upon, no knowledge of Christ, no thought of his power, or of the power of those who came in his name. Thus, when at Lystra Saint Paul healed the man who was a cripple from his birth, so far were the people there from supposing that he could be able to do such a thing as an apostle of Christ, (Acts, xiv.) or by any virtue derived from him, that they took Paul and Barnabas to be gods of their own come down in the likeness of men, and would have sacrificed to them as such.

Now I ask, Did the citizens of Lystra concur in this matter to the deceiving of themselves? Were their imaginations overheated with any conceits of a miraculous power belonging to Paul, which could dispose them to think he worked such a miracle when he did not? As the contrary is evident, so in all other places to which he carried the Gospel, it may be proved to demonstration, that he could find no disposition, no aptness, no bias to aid his imposture, if the miracles, by which he everywhere confirmed his preaching, had not been true.

On the other hand, let us examine, whether, without the advantage of such an assistance, there was any confederacy strong enough to impose his false miracles upon the Gentiles, who were both unprepared and indisposed to receive them. The contrary is apparent. He was in no combination with their priests or their magistrates; no sect or party among them gave him any help; all eyes were open and watchful to detect his impostures, all hands ready to punish him as soon as detected Had he remained in Judea, he would at least have had many confederates, all the apostles, all the disciples of Christ, at that time pretty numerous; but in preaching to the Gentiles, he was often alone, never with more than two or three companions or followers. Was this a confederacy powerful enough to carry on such a cheat, in so many different parts of the world, against the united opposition of their magistrates, priests, philosophers, people, all combined to detect and expose their frauds?

Let it be also considered, that those upon whom they practised these arts were not a gross or ignorant people, apt to mistake any uncommon operations of nature, or juggling tricks, for miraculous acts. The churches planted by Saint Paul were in the most enlightened parts of the world, among the Greeks of Asia and Europe, among the Romans, in the midst of science, philosophy, freedom of thought, and in an age more inquisitively curious into the powers of nature, and less inclined to credit religious frauds, than any before it. Nor were they only the lowest of the people that he converted. Sergius Paulus, the proconsul of Paphos, Erastus, chamberlain[1] of Corinth, and Dionysius the Areopagite, were his proselytes.

Upon the whole it appears, beyond contradiction, that his pretension to miracles was not assisted by the disposition of those whom he designed to convert by those means, nor by any powerful confederacy to carry on and abet the cheat; without both which concurring circumstances, or one at least, no such pretension was ever supported with any success.

Both these circumstances concurred, even in the late famous miracles supposed to be done at Abbé Paris's tomb. They had not indeed the support of the government, and for that reason appear to deserve more attention than other popish miracles; but they were supported by all the Jansenists, a very powerful and numerous party in France, made up partly of wise and able men, partly of bigots and

[1] Οἰκονόμος τῆς πόλεως, treasurer or bailiff of the city.

enthusiasts. All these confederated together to give credit to miracles, said to be worked in behalf of their party, and those who believed them were strongly disposed to that belief. And yet, with these advantages, how easily were they suppressed,—only by walling up that part of the church where the tomb of the saint, who was supposed to work them, was placed? Soon after this was done, a paper was fixed on the wall with this inscription :

De par le roy, defense à Dieu
De faire miracle en ce lieu.

"By command of the king, God is forbidden to work any more miracles here." The pasquinade was a witty one, but the event turned the point of it against the party by which it was made : for, if God had really worked any miracles there, could this absurd prohibition have taken effect? Would he have suffered his purpose to be defeated by building a wall? When all the apostles were shut up in prison to hinder their working miracles, the angel of the Lord opened the prison doors, and let them out, (Acts, v. 16—26.)' But the power of Abbé Paris could neither throw down the wall that excluded his votaries, nor operate through that impediment. And yet his miracles are often compared with, and opposed by unbelievers, to those of Christ and his apostles, which is the reason of my having taken this particular notice of them here.

There is in Lucian an account of a very extraordinary and successful imposture carried on in his days, by one Alexander of Pontus,[7] who introduced a new god into that country, whose prophet he called himself, and in whose name he pretended to miracles, and delivered oracles, by which he acquired great wealth and power. All the arts by which this cheat was managed are laid open by Lucian, and nothing can better point out the difference between imposture and truth, than to observe the different conduct of this man and Saint Paul. Alexander made no alteration in the religion established in Pontus before ; he only grafted his own upon it ;[8] and spared no pains to interest in the success of it the whole heathen priesthood, not only in Pontus, but all over the world : sending great numbers of those who came to consult him to other oracles, which were at that time in the highest vogue ; by which means he engaged them all to support the reputation of his, and abet his imposture.[9] He spoke with the greatest respect of all the sects of philosophers, except the Epicureans, who, from their principles, he was sure would deride and oppose his fraud ; for, though they presumed not to innovate and overturn established religions, yet they very freely attacked and exposed all innovations that were introduced under the name of religion, and had not the authority of a legal establishment. To get the better of their opposition, as well as that of the Christians, he called in the aid of persecution and force, exciting the people against them, and answering objections with stones.[10]

That he might be sure to get money enough, he delivered this oracle in the name of his god ; "I command you to grace with gifts my prophet and minister ; for I have no regard for riches myself, but the greatest for my prophet."[11] And he shared the gains that he made, which were immense, among an infinite number of associates and instruments, whom he employed in carrying on and supporting his fraud. When any declared themselves to be his enemies, against whom he durst not proceed by open force, he endeavoured to gain them by blandishments, and having got them into his power, to destroy them by secret ways, which arts he practised against Lucian himself.[12] Others he kept in awe and dependence upon him, by detaining in his own hands the written questions they had proposed to his god upon state affairs ; and as these generally came from men of the greatest power and rank, his being possessed of them was of infinite service to him, and made him master of all their credit and of no little part of their wealth.[13]

He obtained the protection and friendship of Rutilianus,[14] a great Roman general, by flattering him with promises of a very long life, and exaltation to deity after his death ; and at last having quite turned his head, enjoined him by an oracle to marry his daughter, whom he pretended to have had by the moon : which command Rutilianus obeyed,[15] and by his alliance secured this impostor from any danger of punishment ; the Roman governor of Bithynia and Pontus excusing himself on that account from doing justice upon him, when Lucian[16] and several others offered themselves to be his accusers.

He never quitted that ignorant and barbarous country, which he had made choice of at first as the fittest to play his tricks in undiscovered ; but, residing himself among those superstitious and credulous people, extended his fame to a great distance by the emissaries which he employed all over the world,[17] especially at Rome, who did not pretend themselves to work any miracles, but only promulgated his, and gave him intelligence of all that it was useful for him to know.

These were the methods by which this remarkable fraud was conducted, every one of which is directly opposite to all those used

7 Vide Luciani Pseudomantis
8 Pseudom. Lucian. Varior. pp. 765, 766. 9 Ibid. p. 763.
10 Ibid. pp. 762, 763, 768, 773, 774, 777.
11 Muneribus decorare meum vatem atque ministrum præcipio; nec opum mihi cura, at maxima vatis.
12 Pseud. Luc. Var. pp. 779, 780, 781.
13 Pseud. Luc. Var. 767. 14 Ibid. 768.
15 Ibid. 781. 16 Ibid. 751. 17 Ibid. pp. 762, 769.

by St Paul in preaching the Gospel; and yet such methods alone could give success to a cheat of this kind. I will not mention the many debaucheries and wicked enormities committed by this false prophet under the mask of religion, which is another characteristical difference between him and Saint Paul; nor the ambiguous answers, cunning evasions, and juggling artifices which he used, in all which it is easy to see the evident marks of an imposture, as well as in the objects he plainly appears to have had in view. That which I chiefly insist on is the strong confederacy with which he took care to support his pretension to miraculous powers, and the apt disposition in those he imposed upon to concur and assist in deceiving themselves,—advantages entirely wanting to the apostles of Christ.

From all this I think it may be concluded, that no human means employed by Saint Paul, in his design of converting the Gentiles, were, or could be, adequate to the great difficulties he had to contend with, or to the success that we know attended his work; and we can in reason ascribe that success to no other cause, but the power of God going along with and aiding his ministry, because no other was equal to the effect.

Having then shown that Saint Paul had no rational motives to become an apostle of Christ, without being himself convinced of the truth of that gospel he preached, and that, had he engaged in such an imposture without any rational motives, he would have had no possible means to carry it on with any success; having also brought reasons of a very strong nature to make it appear, that the success he undoubtedly had in preaching the Gospel was an effect of the Divine power attending his ministry, I might rest all my proof of the Christian religion being a divine revelation upon the arguments drawn from this head alone. But to consider this subject in all possible lights, I shall pursue the proposition which I set out with through each of its several parts; and having proved, as I hope, to the conviction of any impartial man, that Saint Paul was not an impostor, who said what he knew to be false with an intent to deceive, I come next to consider, whether he was an enthusiast, who, by the force of an overheated imagination, imposed upon himself.

Now, these are the ingredients of which enthusiasm is generally composed,—great heat of temper, melancholy, ignorance, credulity, and vanity, or self-conceit. That the first of these qualities was in Saint Paul, may be concluded from that fervour of zeal with which he acted both as a Jew and Christian, in maintaining that which he thought to be right; and hence I suppose, as well as from the impossibility of his having been an impostor, some unbelievers have chosen to consider him as an enthusiast. But this quality alone will not be sufficient to prove him to have been so, in the opinion of any reasonable man. The same temper has been common to others, who undoubtedly were not enthusiasts; to the Gracchi, to Cato, to Brutus, to many more among the best and wisest of men. Nor does it appear that this disposition had such a mastery over the mind of Saint Paul, that he was not able at all times to rule and control it by the dictates of reason. On the contrary, he was so much the master of it, as, in matters of an indifferent nature, to "become all things to all men," 1 Cor. ix. 20, 21, 22, bending his notions and manners to theirs, so far as his duty to God would permit, with the most pliant condescension; a conduct neither compatible with the stiffness of a bigot, nor the violent impulses of fanatic delusions. His zeal was eager and warm, but tempered with prudence, and even with the civilities and decorums of life, as appears by his behaviour to Agrippa, Festus, and Felix; not the blind, inconsiderate, indecent zeal of an enthusiast.

Let us now see if any one of those other qualities which I have laid down, as disposing the mind to enthusiasm, and as being characteristical of it, belonged to Saint Paul. First, as to melancholy, which of all dispositions of body or mind is most prone to enthusiasm, it neither appears by his writings, nor by any thing told of him in the Acts of the Apostles, nor by any other evidence, that Saint Paul was inclined to it more than other men.[18] Though he was full of remorse for his former ignorant persecution of the church of Christ, we read of no gloomy penances, no extravagant mortifications, such as the Bramins, the Jaugues, the monks of La Trappe, and other melancholy enthusiasts, inflict on themselves. His holiness only consisted in the simplicity of a good life, and the unwearied performance of those apostolical duties to which he was called. The sufferings he met with on that account he cheerfully bore, and even rejoiced in them for the love of Christ Jesus; but he brought none on himself. We find, on the contrary, that he pleaded the privilege of a Roman citizen to avoid being whipped. I could mention more instances of his having used the best methods that prudence could suggest to escape danger and shun persecution, whenever it could be done without betraying the duty of his office, or the honour of God.[19]

[18] Josephus cont. Apion. l. ii. c. 37.

[19] A remarkable instance of this appears in his conduct among the Athenians. There was at Athens a law, which made it capital to introduce or teach any new gods in their state. Therefore, when Paul was preaching Jesus and the resurrection to the Athenians, (Acts xvii. and Josephus cont. Apion. l. ii. c. 37,) some of them carried him before the court of Areopagus, the ordinary judges of criminal matters, and in a particular manner intrusted with the care of religion, as having broken this law, and being "a setter forth of strange gods." Now, in this case, an

Compare with this the conduct of Francis of Assisi, of Ignatius Loyola, and other enthusiasts sainted by Rome, it will be found the reverse of Saint Paul's. "He wished indeed to die, and be with Christ," but such a wish is no proof of melancholy, or of enthusiasm; it only proves his conviction of the divine truths he preached, and of the happiness laid up for him in those blessed abodes which had been shown to him even in this life. Upon the whole, neither in his actions, nor in the instructions he gave to those under his charge, is there any tincture of melancholy, which yet is so essential a characteristic of enthusiasm, that I have scarcely ever heard of an enthusiast, ancient or modern, in whom some very evident marks of it did not appear.

As to ignorance, which is another ground of enthusiasm, Saint Paul was so far from it, that he appears to have been master, not of the Jewish learning alone, but of the Greek. And this is one reason why he is less liable to the imputation of having been an enthusiast than the other apostles, though none of them were such any more than he, as may, by other arguments, be invincibly proved.

I have mentioned credulity as another characteristic and cause of enthusiasm, which, that it was not in Saint Paul, the history of his life undeniably shows. For, on the contrary, he seems to have been slow and hard of belief in the extremest degree, having paid no regard to all the miracles done by our Saviour, the fame of which he could not be a stranger to, as he lived in Jerusalem, nor to that signal one done after his resurrection, and in his name, by Peter and John, upon the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, Acts, iii.: nor to the evidence given in consequence of it by Peter, in presence of the high-priest, the rulers, elders, and scribes, that Christ was raised from the dead. He must also have known, that when all the apostles had been "shut up in the common prison, and the high-priest, the council, and all the senate of the children of Israel, had sent their officers to bring them before them, the officers came and found them not in prison, but returned," and made this report, "The prison truly found we shut with all safety, and the keepers standing without before the doors; but when we had opened, we found no man within." And that the council was immediately told, "that the men they had put in prison were standing in the temple, and teaching the people." And that being brought thence before the council, they had spoken these memorable words: "We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus, whom ye slew and hanged on a tree. Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins. And we are his witnesses of these things, and so is also the Holy Ghost, whom God has given to them that obey him," (Acts, v. 18. 21, 22, 23, 25, 27, 29—33.) All this he resisted, and was consenting to the murder of Stephen, (Acts, viii. 1,) who preached the same thing, and evidenced it by miracles. So that his mind, far from being disposed to a credulous faith, or a too easy reception of any miracle worked in proof of the Christian religion, appears to have been barred against it by the most obstinate prejudices, as much as any man's could possibly be; and hence we may fairly conclude, that nothing less than the irresistible evidence of his own senses, clear from all possibility of doubt, could have overcome his unbelief.

Vanity, or self-conceit, is another circumstance that for the most part prevails in the character of an enthusiast. It leads men of a warm temper, and religious turn, to think themselves worthy of the special regard and extraordinary favours of God; and the breath of that inspiration to which they pretend, is often no more than the wind of this vanity, which puffs them up to such extravagant imaginations.

This strongly appears in the writings and lives of some enthusiastical heretics, in the Mystics, both ancient and modern, in many founders of orders and saints, both male and female, amongst the Papists, in several Protestant sectaries of the last age, and even in some of the Methodists now.[20] All the divine communications, illuminations, and ecstasies to which they have pretended, evidently sprung from much self-conceit, working together with the vapours of melancholy upon a warm imagination; and this is one reason, besides the contagious nature of melancholy, or fear, that makes enthusiasm so very catching among weak minds. Such are most strongly disposed to vanity; and, when they see others pretend to extraordinary gifts, are apt to flatter themselves that they may partake of them as well as those whose merit they think no more than their own. Vanity therefore may justly be deemed a principal source of enthusiasm. But that Saint Paul was as free from it as any man, I think may be gathered from all that we see in his writings,

impostor would have retracted his doctrine to save his life, and an enthusiast would have lost his life without trying to save it by innocent means. Saint Paul did neither the one nor the other; he availed himself of an altar which he had found in the city, inscribed "To the unknown God," and pleaded, that he did not propose to them the worship of any new god, but only explained to them one whom their government had already received: "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." By this he avoided the law, and escaped being condemned by the Areopagus, without departing in the least from the truth of the Gospel, or violating the honour of God. An admirable proof, in my opinion, of the good sense with which he acted, and one that shows there was no mixture of fanaticism in his religion.

[20] See the account of Montanus and his followers; the writings of the counterfeit Dionysius the Areopagite, Santa Theresa, Saint Catharine of Sienna, Madame Bourignon, the Lives of Saint Francis of Assisi, and Ignatius Loyola. See also an account of the Lives of George Fox, and of Rice Evans; and Whitefield's Journal.

or know of his life. Throughout his Epistles there is not one word that savours of vanity, nor is any action recorded of him in which the least mark of it appears.

In his Epistle to the Ephesians he calls himself "less than the least of all saints," (Eph. iii. 8.) And to the Corinthians he says, "he is the least of the apostles, and not meet to be called an apostle, because he had persecuted the church of God," (1 Cor. xv. 9.) In his Epistle to Timothy he says, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief. Howbeit, for this cause I obtained mercy, that in me first Jesus Christ might show forth all long-suffering, for a pattern to them which should hereafter believe in him to life everlasting," (1 Tim. i. 15, 16.)

It is true, indeed, that in another Epistle he tells the Corinthians, "That he was not a whit behind the very chiefest of the apostles," (2 Cor. xi. 5.) But the occasion which drew from him these words must be considered. A false teacher, by faction and calumny, had brought his apostleship to be in question among the Corinthians. Against such an attack, not to have asserted his apostolical dignity, would have been a betraying of the office and duty committed to him by God. He was therefore constrained to do himself justice, and not let down that character, upon the authority of which the whole success and efficacy of his ministry among them depended. But how did he do it? Not with the wantonness which a vain man indulges, when he can get any opportunity of commending himself; not with a pompous detail of all the amazing miracles which he had performed in different parts of the world, though he had so fair an occasion of doing it; but with a modest and simple exposition of his abundant labours and sufferings in preaching the Gospel, and barely reminding them, "that the signs of an apostle had been wrought among them in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds," (2 Cor. xii. 12.) Could he say less than this? Is not such boasting humility itself? And yet for this he makes many apologies, expressing the greatest uneasiness in being obliged to speak thus of himself, even in his own vindication, (2 Cor. xi. 1, 16, 17, 18, 19, 30.) When, in the same Epistle, and for the same purpose, he mentions the vision he had of heaven, how modestly does he do it! Not in his own name, but in the third person: "I knew a man in Christ, &c. caught up into the third heaven," (2 Cor. xii. 2.) And immediately after he adds, "But now I forbear, lest any man should think of me above that which he seeth me to be, or that he heareth of me," (2 Cor. xii. 6.) How contrary is this to a spirit of vanity! How different from the practice of enthusiastic pretenders to raptures and visions, who never think they can dwell long enough upon those subjects, but fill whole volumes with their accounts of them! Yet Saint Paul is not satisfied with this forbearance: he adds the confession of some infirmity, which he tells the Corinthians was given to him as an allay, "that he might not be above measure exalted through the abundance of his revelations," (2 Cor. xii. 7.) I would also observe that he says this rapture or vision of Paradise happened to him above fourteen years before. Now, had it been the effect of a mere enthusiastical fancy, can it be supposed that, in so long a period of time, he would not have had many more raptures of the same kind? Would not his imagination have been perpetually carrying him to heaven, as we find Saint Theresa, Saint Bridget, and Saint Catharine, were carried by theirs?[21] And if vanity had been predominant in him, would he have remained fourteen years in absolute silence upon so great a mark of the divine favour? No: we should certainly have seen his epistles filled with nothing else but long accounts of these visions, conferences with angels, with Christ, with God Almighty, mystical unions with God, and all that we read in the works of those sainted enthusiasts whom I have mentioned before. But he only mentions this vision in answer to the false teacher who had disputed his apostolical power, and comprehends it all in three sentences, with many excuses for being compelled to make any mention of it at all, (2 Cor. xii. 1—5, 11.) Nor does he take any merit to himself, even from the success of those apostolical labours which he principally boasts of in this Epistle. For in a former one to the same church, he writes thus, "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but ministers by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increase." And in another place of the same Epistle he says, "By the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace which was bestowed upon me was not in vain; but I laboured more abundantly than they all: Yet not I, but the grace of God which was with me," (1 Cor. xv. 10.)

I think it needless to give more instances of the modesty of Saint Paul. Certain I am, not one can be given that bears any colour of vanity—of that vanity in particular which so strongly appears in all enthusiasts, of setting their imaginary gifts above those virtues which make the essence of true religion, and the real excellence of a good man, or, in the Scripture phrase, of a saint. In his First Epistle to the Corinthians he has these words: "Though I speak with the tongues of men,

[21] See their Works and Lives.

and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing. And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing," (1 Cor. xiii. 1—4.) Is this the language of enthusiasm? Did ever enthusiast prefer that universal benevolence which comprehends all moral virtues, and which (as appears by the following verses) is meant by charity here? did ever enthusiast, I say, prefer that benevolence to faith and to miracles, to those religious opinions which he had embraced, and to those supernatural graces and gifts which he imagined he had acquired, nay even to the merit of martyrdom? Is it not the genius of enthusiasm to set moral virtues infinitely below the merit of faith; and, of all moral virtues, to value that least which is more particularly enforced by Saint Paul—a spirit of candour, moderation, and peace? Certainly neither the temper nor the opinions of a man subject to fanatic delusions, are to be found in this passage; but it may be justly concluded, that he who could esteem the value of charity so much above miraculous gifts, could not have pretended to any such gifts if he had them not in reality.

Since then it is manifest from the foregoing examination, that in Saint Paul's disposition and character those qualities do not occur which seem to be necessary to form an enthusiast, it must be reasonable to conclude he was none. But allowing, for argument's sake, that all those qualities were to be found in him, or that the heat of his temper alone could be a sufficient foundation to support such a suspicion, I shall endeavour to prove, that he could not have imposed on himself by any power of enthusiasm, either in regard to the miracle that caused his conversion, or to the consequential effects of it, or to some other circumstances which he bears testimony to in his epistles.

The power of imagination in enthusiastical minds, is, no doubt, very strong, but it always acts in conformity to the opinions imprinted upon it at the time of its working, and can no more act against them, than a rapid river can carry a boat against the current of its own stream. Now, nothing can be more certain, than that when Saul set out for Damascus with an authority from the chief priests, to bring the Christians which were there bound to Jerusalem, (Acts, ix. 2,) an authority solicited by himself, and granted to him at his own earnest desire, his mind was strongly possessed with opinions against Christ and his followers. To give those opinions a more active force, his passions at that time concurred, being inflamed in the highest degree by the irritating consciousness of his past conduct towards them, the pride of supporting a part he had voluntarily engaged in, and the credit he found it had procured him among the chief priests and rulers, whose commission he bore.

If, in such a state and temper of mind, an enthusiastical man had imagined he saw a vision from heaven, denouncing the anger of God against the Christians, and commanding him to persecute them without any mercy, it might be accounted for by the natural power of enthusiasm. But that in the very instant of his being engaged in the fiercest and hottest persecution against them, no circumstance having happened to change his opinions, or alter the bent of his disposition, he should at once imagine himself called by a heavenly vision to be the apostle of Christ, whom but a moment before he deemed an impostor and a blasphemer that had been justly put to death on the cross, is in itself wholly incredible, and so far from being a probable effect of enthusiasm, that just a contrary effect must have been naturally produced by that cause. The warmth of his temper carried him violently another way; and whatever delusions his imagination could raise to impose on his reason, must have been raised at that time agreeably to the notions imprinted upon it, and by which it was heated to a degree of enthusiasm, not in direct contradiction to all those notions, while they remained in their full force.

This is so clear a proposition, that I might rest the whole argument entirely upon it; but still farther to show that this vision could not be a phantom of Saint Paul's own creating, I beg leave to observe, that he was not alone when he saw it: there were many others in company, whose minds were no better disposed than his to the Christian faith. Could it be possible that the imaginations of all these men should at the same time be so strangely affected, as to make them believe that they saw "a great light shining about them, above the brightness of the sun at noonday," (Acts, ix. 3; xxii. 9.) and heard the sound of a voice from heaven, though not the words which it spake, when in reality they neither saw nor heard any such thing? Could they be so infatuated with this conceit of their fancy, as to fall down from their horses together with Saul, and be speechless, through fear, (Acts, xxvi. 14; ix. 7,) when nothing had happened extraordinary either to them or to him; especially considering that this apparition did not happen in the night, when the senses are more easily imposed upon, but at mid-day? If a sudden frenzy had seized upon Saul, from any distemper of body or mind, can we suppose his whole company, men of different constitutions and understandings, to have been at once affected in the same manner

with him, so that not the distemper alone, but the effects of it, should exactly agree? If all had gone mad together, would not the frenzy of some have taken a different turn, and presented to them different objects? This supposition is so contrary to nature, and all possibility, that unbelief must find some other solution, or give up the point.

I shall suppose, then, in order to try to account for this vision without a miracle, that as Saul and his company were journeying along in their way to Damascus, an extraordinary meteor did really happen, which cast a great light, as some meteors will do, at which they being affrighted fell to the ground in the manner related. This might be possible; and fear, grounded on ignorance of such phenomena, might make them imagine it to be a vision from God. Nay, even the voice or sound they heard in the air, might be an explosion attending this meteor; or at least there are those who would rather recur to such a supposition as this, however incredible, than acknowledge the miracle. But how will this account for the distinct words heard by Saint Paul, to which he made answer? How will it account for what followed upon it when he came to Damascus, agreeably to the sense of those words which he heard? How came Ananias to go to him there, and say, "He was chosen by God to know his will, and see that Just One, and hear the voice of his mouth?" (Acts, xxii. 14.) Or why did he propose to him to be baptized? (Acts, xxii. 16.) What connection was there between the meteor which Saul had seen, and these words of Ananias? Will it be said, that Ananias was skilful enough to take advantage of the fright he was in at that appearance, in order to make him a Christian? But could Ananias inspire him with a vision in which he saw him before he came? If that vision was the effect of imagination, how was it verified so exactly in fact? (Acts, ix.) But allowing that he dreamt by chance of Ananias's coming, and that Ananias came by chance too; or, if you please, that, having heard of his dream, he came to take advantage of that, as well as of the meteor which Saul had seen, will this get over the difficulty? No: there was more to be done. Saul was struck blind, and had been so for three days. Now, had this blindness been natural, from the effects of a meteor or lightning upon him, it would not have been possible for Ananias to heal it, as we find that he did, merely by putting his hands on him and speaking a few words. This undoubtedly surpassed the power of nature; and if this was a miracle, it proves the other to have been a miracle too, and a miracle done by the same Jesus Christ. For Ananias, when he healed Saul, spoke to him thus: "Brother Saul, the Lord, even Jesus, that appeared unto thee in the way as thou camest, has sent me, that thou mightest receive thy sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," (Acts, ix. 17, 18; xxii. 13.) And that he saw Christ both now and after this time, appears not only by what he relates, (Acts, xxii. 17, 18,) but by other passages in his epistles, (1 Cor. ix. 1; xv. 8; Acts, xi. 17.) From him (as he asserts in many places of his epistles) he learned the Gospel by immediate revelation, and by him he was sent to the Gentiles, (Acts, xxii. 21.; xxiii. 11.) Among those Gentiles, "from Jerusalem, and round about to Illyricum," he preached the gospel of Christ, "with mighty signs and wonders wrought by the power of the Spirit of God, to make them obedient to his preaching," (Rom. xv. 19,) as he testifies himself in his Epistle to the Romans, and of which a particular account is given to us in the Acts of the Apostles; signs and wonders, indeed, above any power of nature to work, or of imposture to counterfeit, or of enthusiasm to imagine. Now, does not such a series of miraculous acts, all consequential to and dependent upon the first revelation, put the truth of that revelation beyond all possibility of doubt or deceit? And if he could so have imposed on himself as to think that he worked them when he did not, (which supposition cannot be admitted, if he was not all that time quite out of his senses,) how could so distempered an enthusiast make such a progress, as we know that he did, in converting the Gentile world? If the difficulties which have been shown to have obstructed that work were such as the ablest impostor could not overcome, how much more insurmountable were they to a madman? It is a much harder task for unbelievers to account for the success of Saint Paul, in preaching the Gospel, upon the supposition of his having been an enthusiast, than of his having been an impostor. Neither of these suppositions can ever account for it; but the impossibility is more glaringly strong in this case than the other. I could enter into a particular examination of all the miracles recorded in the Acts to have been done by Saint Paul, and show that they were not of a nature in which enthusiasm, (either in him, or the persons he worked them upon, or the spectators,) could have any part. I will mention only a few:—

When he told Elymas the sorcerer, at Paphos, before the Roman deputy, that "the hand of God was upon him, and he should be blind, not seeing the sun for a season; and immediately there fell on him a mist and a darkness, and he went about seeking some to lead him by the hand," (Acts, xiii.) had enthusiasm in the doer or sufferer any share in this act? If Paul, as an enthusiast, had thrown out this menace, and the effect had not followed, instead of converting the deputy,

(as we are told that he did,) he would have drawn on himself his rage and contempt. But the effect upon Elymas could not be caused by enthusiasm in Paul; much less can it be imputed to an enthusiastic belief in that person himself, of his being struck blind, when he was not, by those words of a man whose preaching he strenuously and bitterly opposed. Nor can we ascribe the conversion of Sergius, which happened upon it, to any enthusiasm. A Roman proconsul was not very likely to be an enthusiast: but had he been one, he must have been bigoted to his own gods, and so much the less inclined to believe any miraculous power in Saint Paul. When at Troas, a young man named Eutychus fell down from a high window, while Paul was preaching, and was taken up dead; could any enthusiasm, either in Paul or the congregation there present, make them believe, that by that apostle's falling upon him, and embracing him, he was restored to life? (Acts, xx. 9.) Or could he who was so restored contribute any thing to it himself, by any power of his own imagination? When in the Isle of Melita, where Saint Paul was shipwrecked, there came a viper and fastened on his hand, which he shook off, and felt no harm: was that an effect of enthusiasm? (Acts, xxviii.) An enthusiast might perhaps have been mad enough to hope for safety against the bite of a viper without any remedy being applied to it; but would that hope have prevented his death? Or were the barbarous islanders, to whom this apostle was an absolute stranger, prepared by enthusiasm to expect and believe that any miracle would be worked to preserve him? On the contrary, when they saw the viper hang on his hand, they said among themselves, "No doubt this man is a murderer, whom, though he hath escaped the sea, yet vengeance suffereth not to live." I will add no more instances: these are sufficient to show, that the miracles told of Saint Paul can no more be ascribed to enthusiasm than to imposture.

But, moreover, the power of working miracles was not confined to Saint Paul, it was also communicated to the churches he planted in different parts of the world. In many parts of his first Epistle he tells the Corinthians, that they had among them many miraculous graces and gifts, and gives them directions for the more orderly use of them in their assemblies, (1 Cor. xii. 4, 5.) Now, I ask, whether all he has said upon that head is to be ascribed to enthusiasm? If the Corinthians knew that they had among them no such miraculous powers, they must have regarded the author of that epistle as a man out of his senses, instead of revering him as an apostle of God.

If, for instance, a Quaker should, in a meeting of his own sect, tell all the persons assembled there, that "to some among them was given the gift of healing by the Spirit of God, to others the working of other miracles, to others divers kinds of tongues," they would undoubtedly account him a madman, because they pretend to no such gifts. If, indeed, they were only told by him that they were inspired by the Spirit of God, in a certain ineffable manner, which they alone could understand, but which did not discover itself by any outward distinct operations or signs, they might mistake the impulse of enthusiasm for the inspiration of the Holy Ghost; but they could not believe, against the conviction of their own minds, that they spoke tongues they did not speak, or healed distempers they did not heal, or worked other miracles, when they worked none. If it be said, the Corinthians might pretend to these powers, though the Quakers do not, I ask, whether in that pretension they were impostors, or only enthusiasts? If they were impostors, and Saint Paul was also such, how ridiculous was it for him to advise them, in an epistle written only to them and for their own use, not to value themselves too highly upon those gifts, to pray for one rather than another, and prefer charity to them all? Do associates in fraud talk such a language to one another? But if we suppose their pretension to all those gifts was an effect of enthusiasm, let us consider how it was possible that he and they could be so cheated by that enthusiasm, as to imagine they had such powers when they had not.

Suppose that enthusiasm could make a man think that he was able by a word or a touch to give sight to the blind, motion to the lame, or life to the dead; would that conceit of his make the blind see, the lame walk, or the dead revive? And if it did not, how could he persist in such an opinion, or upon his persisting, escape being shut up for a madman? But such a madness could not infect so many at once, as Saint Paul supposes at Corinth to have been endowed with the gift of healing, or any other miraculous power. One of the miracles which they pretended to was the speaking of languages they never had learned. And Saint Paul says, he possessed the gift more than them all. If this had been a delusion of fancy, if they had spoke only gibberish or unmeaning sounds, it would soon have appeared when they came to make use of it where it was necessary, namely, in converting of those who understood not any language they naturally spoke, (1 Cor. xiv. 18.) Saint Paul particularly, who travelled so far upon that design, and had such occasion to use it, must soon have discovered that this imaginary gift of the Spirit was no gift at all, but a ridiculous instance of frenzy, which had possessed both him and them. But if those he spoke to in divers tongues understood what

he said, and were converted to Christ by that means, how could it be a delusion! Of all the miracles recorded in Scripture, none are more clear from any possible imputation of being the effect of an enthusiastic imagination than this. For how could any man think that he had it, who had it not; or if he did think so, not be undeceived when he came to put his gift to the proof? Accordingly, I do not find such a power to have been ever pretended to by any enthusiast, ancient or modern.

If, then, Saint Paul and the Church of Corinth were not deceived in ascribing to themselves this miraculous power, but really had it, there is the strongest reason to think, that neither were they deceived in the other powers to which they pretended; as the same Spirit which gave them that, equally could, and probably would, give them the others, to serve the same holy ends for which that was given; and by consequence, Saint Paul was no enthusiast in what he wrote upon that head to the Corinthians, nor in other similar instances, where he ascribes to himself, or the Churches he founded, any supernatural graces and gifts. Indeed, they who would impute to imagination effects such as those which Saint Paul imputes to the power of God attending his mission, must ascribe to imagination the same omnipotence which he ascribes to God.

Having thus, I flatter myself, satisfactorily shown that Saint Paul could not be an enthusiast, who by the force of an overheated imagination imposed on himself, I am next to inquire whether he was deceived by the fraud of others, and whether all that he said of himself can be imputed to the power of that deceit? But I need say little to show the absurdity of this supposition. It was morally impossible for the disciples of Christ to conceive such a thought as that of turning his persecutor into his apostle, and to do this by a fraud in the very instant of his greatest fury against them and their Lord. But could they have been so extravagant as to conceive such a thought, it was physically impossible for them to execute it in the manner we find his conversion to have been effected. Could they produce a light in the air, which at mid-day was brighter than that of the sun? Could they make Saul hear words from out of that light, which were not heard by the rest of the company? (Acts, xxii. 9.) Could they make him blind for three days after that vision, and then make scales fall from his eyes, and restore him to his sight by a word? Beyond dispute, no fraud could do these things; but much less still could the fraud of others produce those miracles subsequent to his conversion, in which he was not passive, but active, which he did himself, and appeals to in his epistles as proofs of his divine mission. I shall then take it for granted that he was not deceived by the fraud of others, and that what he said of himself cannot be imputed to the power of that deceit, no more than to wilful imposture or to enthusiasm; and then it follows, that what he related to have been the cause of his conversion, and to have happened in consequence of it, did all really happen, and therefore the Christian religion is a divine revelation.

That this conclusion is fairly and undeniably drawn from the premises, I think must be owned, unless some probable cause can be assigned, to account for those facts so authentically related in the Acts of the Apostles, and attested in his epistles by Saint Paul himself, other than any of those which I have considered; and this I am confident cannot be done. It must be therefore accounted for by the power of God. That God should work miracles for the establishment of a most holy religion, which, from the insuperable difficulties that stood in the way of it, could not have established itself without such an assistance, is no way repugnant to human reason: but that without any miracle such things should have happened as no adequate natural causes can be assigned for, is what human reason cannot believe.

To impute them to magic, or the power of demons, (which was the resource of Heathens and Jews against the notoriety of the miracles performed by Christ and his disciples,) is by no means agreeable to the notions of those who in this age disbelieve Christianity. It will therefore be needless to show the weakness of that supposition: but that supposition itself is no inconsiderable argument of the truth of the facts. Next to the Apostles and Evangelists, the strongest witnesses of the undeniable force of that truth are Celsus and Julian, and other ancient opponents of the Christian religion, who were obliged to solve what they could not contradict, by such an irrational and absurd imagination.

The dispute was not then between faith and reason, but between religion and superstition. Superstition ascribed to cabalistical names, or magical secrets, such operations as carried along with them evident marks of the divine power: religion ascribed them to God, and reason declared itself on that side of the question. Upon what grounds then can we now overturn that decision? Upon what grounds can we reject the unquestionable testimony given by Saint Paul, that he was called by God to be a disciple and apostle of Christ? It has been shown, that we cannot impute it either to enthusiasm or fraud: how shall we then resist the conviction of such a proof? Does the doctrine he preached contain any precepts against the law of morality, that natural law written by God in the hearts of mankind? If it did, I confess that none of

the arguments I have used could prove such a doctrine to come from him. But this is so far from being the case, that even those who reject Christianity as a divine revelation, acknowledge the morals delivered by Christ and by his apostles to be worthy of God. Is it then on account of the mysteries in the Gospel that the facts are denied, though supported by evidence which in all other cases would be allowed to contain the clearest conviction, and cannot in this be rejected without reducing the mind to a state of absolute scepticism, and overturning those rules by which we judge of all evidence, and of the truth or credibility of all other facts? But this is plainly to give up the use of our understanding where we are able to use it most properly, in order to apply it to things of which it is not a competent judge. The motives and reasons upon which divine wisdom may think proper to act, as well as the manner in which it acts, must often lie out of the reach of our understanding; but the motives and reasons of human actions, and the manner in which they are performed, are all in the sphere of human knowledge, and upon them we may judge, with a well-grounded confidence, when they are fairly proposed to our consideration.

It is incomparably more probable that a revelation from God concerning the ways of his providence, should contain in it matters above the capacity of our minds to comprehend, than that Saint Paul, or indeed any of the other apostles, should have acted, as we know that they did, upon any other foundations than certain knowledge of Christ's being risen from the dead; or should have succeeded in the work they undertook, without the aid of miraculous powers. To the former of these propositions I may give my assent, without any direct opposition of reason to faith; but in admitting the latter, I must believe against all those probabilities that are the rational grounds of assent.

Nor do they who reject the Christian religion, because of the difficulties which occur in its mysteries, consider how far that objection will go against other systems, both of religion and of philosophy, which they themselves profess to admit. There are in Deism itself, the most simple of all religious opinions, several difficulties, for which human reason can but ill account; which may therefore be not improperly styled, articles of faith. Such is the origin of evil under the government of an all-good and all-powerful God,—a question so hard, that the inability of solving it in a manner satisfactory to their apprehensions, has driven some of the greatest philosophers into the monstrous and senseless opinions of Manicheism and Atheism. Such is the reconciling the prescience of God with the free-will of man, which, after much thought on the subject, Mr Locke[22] fairly confesses he could not do, though he acknowledged both; and what Mr Locke could not do, in reasoning upon subjects of a metaphysical nature, I am apt to think, few men, if any, can hope to perform. Such is also the creation of the world at any supposed time, or the eternal production of it from God; it being almost equally hard, according to mere philosophical notions, either to admit that the goodness of God could remain unexerted through all eternity, before the time of such a creation, let it be set back ever so far, or to conceive an eternal production; which words, so applied, are inconsistent and contradictory terms; the solution commonly given, by a comparison to the emanation of light from the sun, not being adequate to it, or just, for light is a quality inherent in fire, and naturally emanating from it; whereas matter is not a quality inherent in or emanating from the divine essence, but of a different substance and nature, and if not independent and self-existing, must have been created by a mere act of the divine will; and if created, then not eternal, the idea of creation implying a time when the substance created did not exist. But if, to get rid of this difficulty, we have recourse, as many of the ancient philosophers had, to the independent existence of matter, then we must admit two self-existing principles, which is quite inconsistent with genuine Theism or natural reason. Nay, could that be admitted, it would not yet clear up the doubt, unless we suppose, not only the eternal existence of matter, independent of God, but that it was from eternity in the order and beauty we see it in now, without any agency of the divine power; otherwise the same difficulty will always occur, why it was not before put in that order and state of perfection; or how the goodness of God could so long remain in a state of inaction, unexerted and unemployed. For, were the time of such an exertion of it put back ever so far; if, instead of five or six thousand years, we were to suppose millions of millions of ages to have passed since the world[23] was reduced out of a chaos to an harmonious and regular form, still a whole eternity must have preceded that date, during which the divine attributes did not exert themselves in that beneficent work, so suitable to them, that the conjectures of human reason can find no cause for its being delayed.

But because of these difficulties, or any other that may occur in the system of Deism, no wise man will deny the being of God, or his infinite wisdom, goodness, and power, which are proved by such evidence as carries the

[22] See his Letter to Mr Molyneux.

[23] By the world, I do not mean this earth alone, but the whole material universe, with all its inhabitants. Even created spirits fall under the same reasoning; for they must also have had a beginning, and before that beginning an eternity must have preceded.

clearest and strongest conviction, and cannot be refused without involving the mind in far greater difficulties, even in downright absurdities and impossibilities. The only part, therefore, that can be taken is, to account in the best manner that our weak reason is able to do, for such seeming objections; and where that fails, to acknowledge its weakness, and acquiesce, under the certainty that our very imperfect knowledge, or judgment, cannot be the measure of the divine wisdom, or the universal standard of truth. So likewise it is with respect to the Christian Religion. Some difficulties occur in that revelation, which human reason can hardly clear; but as the truth of it stands upon evidence so strong and convincing, that it cannot be denied without much greater difficulties than those that attend the belief of it, (as I have before endeavoured to prove,) we ought not to reject it upon such objections, however mortifying they may be to our pride. That, indeed, would have all things made plain to us; but God has thought proper to proportion our knowledge to our wants, not our pride. All that concerns our duty is clear; and as to other points, either of natural or revealed religion, if he has left some obscurities in them, is that any reasonable cause of complaint? Not to rejoice in the benefit of what he has graciously allowed us to know, from a presumptuous disgust at our incapacity of knowing more, is as absurd as it would be to refuse to walk, because we cannot fly.

From the arrogant ignorance of metaphysical reasonings, aiming at matters above our knowledge, arose all the speculative impiety, and many of the worst superstitions of the old heathen world, before the Gospel was preached to bring men back again to the primitive faith; and from the same source have since flowed some of the greatest corruptions of the evangelical truth, and the most inveterate prejudices against it, — an effect just as natural as for our eyes to grow weak, and even blind, by being strained to look at objects too distant, or not made for them to see.

Are then our intellectual faculties of no use in religion? Yes, undoubtedly, of the most necessary use, when rightly employed. The proper employment of them is to distinguish its genuine doctrines from others erroneously or corruptly ascribed to it; to consider the importance and purport of them, with the connection they bear to one another; but first of all to examine, with the strictest attention, the evidence by which religion is proved, internal as well as external. If the external evidence be convincingly strong, and there is no internal proof of its falsehood, but much to support and confirm its truth, then surely no difficulties ought to prevent our giving a full assent and belief to it. It is our duty, indeed, to endeavour to find the best solutions we can to them; but where no satisfactory ones are to be found, it is no less our duty to acquiesce with humility, and believe that to be right which we know is above us, and belonging to a wisdom superior to ours.

Nor let it be said, that this will be an argument for the admitting all doctrines, however absurd, that may have been grafted upon the Christian faith. Those which can plainly be proved not to belong to it, fall not under the reasoning I have laid down, (and certainly none do belong to it which contradict either our clear intuitive knowledge, or the evident principles and dictates of reason.) I speak only of difficulties which attend the belief of the Gospel in some of its pure and essential doctrines, plainly and evidently delivered there, which, being made known to us by a revelation, supported by proofs that our reason ought to admit, and not being such things as it can certainly know to be false, must be received by it as objects of faith, though they are such as it could not have discovered by any natural means, and such as are difficult to be conceived, or satisfactorily explained, by its limited powers. If the glorious light of the Gospel be sometimes overcast with clouds of doubt, so is the light of our reason too. But shall we deprive ourselves of the advantage of either, because those clouds cannot perhaps be entirely removed while we remain in this mortal life? Shall we obstinately and frowardly shut our eyes against "that day-spring from on high that has visited us," because we are not as yet able to bear the full blaze of his beams? Indeed, not even in heaven itself, not in the highest state of perfection to which a finite being can ever attain, will all the counsels of providence, all the height and the depth of the infinite wisdom of God, be ever disclosed or understood. Faith even then will be necessary; and there will be mysteries which cannot be penetrated by the most exalted archangel, and truths which cannot be known by him otherwise than from revelation, or believed upon any other ground of assent than a submissive confidence in the divine wisdom. What, then, shall man presume that his weak and narrow understanding is sufficient to guide him into all truth, without any need of revelation or faith? Shall he complain that the "ways of God are not like his ways, and past his finding out?" True philosophy, as well as true Christianity, would teach us a wiser and modester part. It would teach us to be content within those bounds which God has assigned to us, "casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ," (2 Cor. x. 5.)

THE END.

INTRODUCTION.

THE following Observations took their rise from a pamphlet, entitled, "The Resurrection of Jesus considered, in Answer to the Trial of the Witnesses: by a Moral Philosopher." The author of which, in order to overturn the testimony of the evangelists, hath attempted to shew that they contradict each other in the accounts they have given of this fact. To this pamphlet there came out two very learned and ingenious answers; which I read with great satisfaction, as I found in them solid confutations of many objections against Christianity started in the first. But I must confess, (though with the utmost respect to the knowledge and abilities of the authors of the two last-mentioned pamphlets,) that I was not so fully satisfied with their manner of clearing the sacred writers from the contradictions charged upon them. This set me upon reading and examining with attention the Scriptures themselves; and with no other bias, than what arose from the astonishment I was under at finding writers, who for above these sixteen hundred years have been reputed holy and inspired, charged with such a contrariety in their accounts, as ill agreed with either of those epithets. Of the truth of this charge, therefore, I acknowledge I had great difficulty to persuade myself. And indeed it was not long before I discovered, as I imagined, the vanity and weakness of such an imputation; which, however, I cannot style altogether groundless, since it has an appearance of being founded in the words of the Gospel; though, in reality, that foundation lies no deeper than the outside and surface of the words: neither will I call it malicious, since having upon farther inquiry found it to be of a very ancient date, I know not the first authors of it, and consequently can form no judgment of their intentions. What I have to offer in defence of the evangelists, is built in like manner upon the sacred text; whose true meaning (which upon this occasion I searched for in vain in the notes of many eminent commentators) I have endeavoured to investigate and prove, by comparing their several accounts with each other, and noting the agreement and disagreement of the circumstances. A method that hath led me unavoidably into critical observations; for the length and dryness of which I should, however, think myself obliged to make some excuse, did I write only for amusement, or expect to be read by those who seek in books for nothing more solid than entertainment.

But although the clearing the sacred writers from the imputation of contradicting each other, was the principal, and indeed the sole object I had at first in view; yet having, in the pursuit of this object, perceived the light breaking in upon me still more and more the farther I advanced, and discovering to me almost at every step some new circumstances, which tended to illustrate and confirm the testimony given by these inspired historians to the Resurrection of Jesus Christ, I was induced, by these discoveries, to go very far beyond my first design, into a consideration of the evidences of this great and important article, not those only recorded in the sacred writings, but others arising from subsequent events and facts; of which we have, by several ways, many clear and unquestionable proofs. The method in which I have proceeded in this consideration, is as follows: I have begun with laying down the order in which the several incidents related by the evangelists appear to have happened; and in the next place, I have made some observations upon the method and manner in which the proofs of this astonishing event were laid before the apostles, who were appointed to bear witness of it to all the world. And to these I have, in the third place, added an exact and rigorous examination of the proofs themselves; from all which I have endeavoured to shew, that the Resurrection of Christ was most fairly and fully proved to the apostles and disciples, those first converts and preachers of Christianity.

But as the Resurrection's having been fully proved to the apostles, though absolutely necessary, yet is not of itself sufficient to authorize at this time, and establish, the faith of a Christian, I imagined that what I had already written would be imperfect, at least, if not altogether useless, unless I added some arguments and reasons I had to offer to induce us, who live at the distance of seventeen hundred years from the date of that miraculous event, to believe that Christ is risen from the dead. These reasons therefore I have thought proper to subjoin under two heads, namely, the testimony of the chosen witnesses of the Resurrection recorded in the Scriptures, and the existence of the Christian religion.

From this account of the rise, progress, and design of the following Observations, the reader will perceive that they were first begun with the single view of obtaining satisfaction for myself upon some difficulties in the evangelical history of the Resurrection; and that they are now published with the hopes of their being as useful to others, as they have been to me. This is the chief, if not the sole end that a layman can reasonably propose to himself in publishing any thing upon a subject of this nature: for I am not ignorant how little reputation is to be gained by writing on the side of Christianity, which by many people is regarded as a superstitious fable not worth the thoughts of a wise man; and considered by more as a mere political scheme, calculated to serve the power and interest of the clergy only. How absolutely groundless both these opinions are, will easily appear to any one, who will take the pains to examine fairly and impartially the Proofs and Doctrines of the Christian religion; Proofs established upon facts, the surest foundations of evidence; and Doctrines, derived by inspiration from the great Author of reason, and Father of all mankind. Whoever hath either neglected, or doth refuse to make this examination, can have no right to pass his judgment upon Christianity, and should, methinks, for the same reason, be somewhat cautious of censuring those who acknowledge it to be of divine institution; especially as he will find in the list of Christians, the great and venerable names of Bacon, Milton, Boyle, Locke, and Newton; names to whose authority every thing should submit but truth, to whom they themselves thought it not beneath their superior talents to submit, though she required them to believe in Christ.

But it may possibly be demanded, why, being a layman, I presume to intermeddle in a province commonly thought to belong peculiarly to the clergy? To which I answer, that besides the motives above suggested, this very prejudice was a powerful inducement to me to publish the following Observations, and to prefix my name to them. The clergy, I am sensible, are both ready and able to maintain the cause of Christianity, as their many excellent writings in defence of it sufficiently demonstrate; but as the generality of mankind is more governed by prejudice than reason, the writings of the clergy are not so universally read, or so candidly received as they deserve, because they are supposed to proceed, not from conscience and conviction, but from interested views and the common cause of their profession: a supposition evidently as partial and injurious as that would be, which should impute the gallant behaviour of our officers to the mean considerations of their pay, and the views of preferment, exclusive of all the nobler motives of a gentleman, namely, the sense of honour, and the love of his country. But the clergy, I dare say, who, if there be any thing besides prejudice in the above-mentioned imputation upon them, have alone the right to make this demand, will readily excuse my appearing in the cause of Christianity. And the laity, I hope, such of them at least as are Christians not in name and profession only, will join with me in declaring against the vain prejudices of unbelievers, that the Christian religion is of the utmost importance to all orders and degrees of men; and that the greatest service that the most zealous patriot can do his country, is to promote the faith, and thereby encourage the practice of the truly divine virtues recommended by Christ and his apostles.

For my own part, if any sincere inquirer after truth, any one honest man, shall receive the least benefit from the following Observations, I shall think I have neither written nor lived in vain.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE

RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST.

Sect. I.—John, xx. 1—18. "The first day of the week cometh Mary Magdalene early, when it was yet dark, unto the sepulchre, and seeth the stone taken away from the sepulchre. Then she runneth, and cometh to Simon Peter, and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and saith unto them, They have taken away the Lord out of the sepulchre, and we know not where they have laid him. Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre. So they ran both together, and the other disciple did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; and he stooping down, and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying; yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed; for as yet they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead: then the disciples went away again unto their own homes. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her."

From this passage of the gospel of Saint John, it is evident, 1*st*, that Mary Magdalene had not seen any vision of angels, before she ran to Peter; and consequently, that she was not of the number of those women who went into the sepulchre, and were there told by an angel that Jesus was risen: for had she, before she went to Peter, seen any angels, she would certainly have added so extraordinary a circumstance to her account; and had she been informed by an angel that Jesus was risen, she could not have persisted in lamenting at not being able to find the body; nor have inquired of him, whom she took to be the gardener, where he had put it, that she might take it away. It is also farther observable, that when, after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, and their departure from thence, she saw a vision of angels, she was standing without, at the sepulchre, weeping; that stooping down, and looking (not going) into the sepulchre, she saw two angels in white, "sitting, the one at the head, the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain," who said no more to her than, "Woman, why weepest thou?" To which she answered, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him." From all which circumstances it appears, 2*dly*, that neither after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, was she with those women who went into the sepulchre, &c.; that she had not heard any thing of Christ's being risen from the dead; and that therefore those women, who were told by an angel that he was risen, were not at the sepulchre when she returned thither with Peter and John. And indeed, from the whole tenor of the above-cited passage of Saint John's gospel, throughout which no mention is made of any other woman besides Mary Magdalene, it is more than probable she was alone when she saw the angels, and when Christ appeared to her immediately after. That she was alone when

Christ appeared to her, is plainly implied in what Saint Mark says, (xvi. 9,) who tells us expressly, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, had she been accompanied by the other women, could not have been spoken of her with any propriety of speech. In the 3*d* place, it is plain from the above relation, that the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they thought proper; for John and Peter going into the sepulchre saw no angels; but Mary, after their departure, looking in, saw two, one sitting at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain.

Sect. II.—Luke, xxiv. 13—24. "The same day two of them (the disciples) went to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs, and they talked together of all these things that had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them; but their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God, and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive: and certain of them which were with us went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not."

The latter part of this passage, which contains an abridgment of a report made by some women to the apostles before these two disciples had left Jerusalem, suggests the following observations: 1*st*, The angels seen by these women at the sepulchre told them that Jesus was alive, whence it follows, that this report was not made by Mary Magdalene; for the angels which she saw said no such thing to her. 2*dly*, As there is no notice taken of any appearance of our Saviour to these women, it is also evident, that this report could not have been made by the other Mary and Salome, to whom, as they were going to tell the disciples the message of the angel which they had seen at the sepulchre, Jesus appeared, as I shall presently shew from Saint Matthew. 3*dly*, There were therefore several reports made at different times to the apostles, and by different women. At different times; for the two disciples, who, before they left Jerusalem, had heard the report now under consideration, had not heard those of Mary Magdalene, of the other Mary, and Salome. By different women; for it having been just now proved, that this report could not belong to either of the last-mentioned women, it must have been made by some other; and no other being named by any of the evangelists but Joanna, it came in all likelihood from her, and those that attended her. 4*thly*, Some of the disciples, upon hearing this report, "went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said," that is, in the most obvious sense of these words, they saw the body was gone, and they saw some angels. But I shall not insist upon this interpretation, but only observe, that if Peter be supposed to have been one of those disciples who, upon this information of the women, went to the sepulchre, this must have been the second time of his going thither. That Peter went a second time to the sepulchre I shall shew more at large, when I come to consider the former part of this chapter of Saint Luke.

These several conclusions being admitted, I think it will be no difficult matter to defend the evangelists against the imputation of contradicting each other, in the accounts they have given of what happened on the day of the resurrection. For unless authors, who relate different and independent parts of the same history, may, for that reason, be said to contradict each other, the evangelists, I will be bold to say, stand as clear of that charge, at least in that part of their writings which we are now examining, as any of the most accurate historians either ancient or modern; as I shall now endeavour to prove, by considering and comparing the several relations of this day's events in the gospels of Saint Matthew, Saint Mark, Saint Luke, and Saint John. That written by Saint John I have already produced, so that there will be no occasion for inserting it again in this place; those of Saint Matthew and Saint Mark I shall produce and examine together, for reasons which will be evident hereafter.

Sect. III.—Matthew, xxviii. 1—17. "In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And behold there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him

the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay: And go quickly and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you. And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy, and did run to bring his disciples word. And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me. Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done. And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, his disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept. And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you. So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them. And when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted."

Mark, xvi. 1—14. "And when the sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him; and very early in the morning, the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun. And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away, for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen, he is not here: Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man; for they were afraid. Now when Jesus was risen, early in the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had cast seven devils. And she went and told them that had been with him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they heard that he was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not. After that, he appeared in another form unto two of them, as they walked and went into the country. And they went and told it unto the residue; neither believed they them. Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen him after he was risen."

I shall range the observations I intend to make upon the several particulars contained in these two passages, under three heads. 1*st*, Of such circumstances as are related by one of these evangelists, but omitted by the other; the 2*d*, Of such as they both agree in; and the 3*d*, Of such as seem to clash and disagree with each other. 1*st*, The several particulars of the earthquake, the descent of the angel from heaven, his rolling away the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sitting upon it, and the terror of the soldiers who guarded the sepulchre, are related only by Saint Matthew; as are likewise the appearances of our Saviour to the women, and to the eleven disciples in Galilee, and the flight of the guards into the city, and all that passed between them and the chief priests upon that occasion. On the other hand, Saint Mark alone makes mention of the women's having bought spices, that they might come and anoint the body of our Saviour—of Salome's being one of those women—of their entering into the sepulchre, and seeing there a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment—of the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, to the two disciples who were going into the country, and lastly to the eleven as they sat at meat. As not one of all these circumstances can be proved to contradict or even disagree with any particular, which either of these evangelists has thought fit to mention, no argument against the reality or credibility of them can be drawn from their not having been taken notice of by both; unless it can be made appear, that a fact related by one historian, or one evidence, must therefore be false, because it is passed over in silence by another. Saint Matthew wrote his gospel first, within a few years after the ascension of our Lord; this gospel Saint Mark, who wrote his some years after, is said to have abridged; though this, I think, is said with very little propriety. For how can that book be styled an abridgment, which contains many particulars not mentioned in the original author? That Saint Mark relates many circumstances not taken notice of by Saint Matthew, will easily appear to any one who shall take the pains to compare them together; and of this, to go no farther, we

have a plain instance in the two passages before us.

Saint Matthew wrote his gospel at the request of the Jewish converts, who having lived in that country where the scene of this great history was laid, were doubtless acquainted with many particulars, which, for that reason, it was not necessary to mention. This will account for the conciseness, and seeming defectiveness of his narrations in many places, as well as for his omitting some circumstances which the other evangelists thought proper to relate. Saint Mark composed his for Christians of other nations, who, not having the same opportunities of being informed as their brethren of Judea, stood in need of some notes and comments to enable them the better to understand the extract, which Saint Mark chose to give them out of the gospel written by Saint Matthew. It was therefore necessary for Saint Mark to insert many particulars, which the purpose of Saint Matthew in writing his gospel did not lead him to take notice of. Allowing these evangelists to have had these two distinct views, let us see how they have pursued them in the passages now under consideration.

That the disciples of Jesus came by night, and stole away the body while the guards slept, was commonly reported among the Jews, even so long after the ascension of our Lord as when Saint Matthew wrote his gospel, as himself tells us, (xxviii. 15.) To furnish the Jewish converts with an answer to this absurd story, so industriously propagated among their unbelieving brethren, and supported by the authority of the chief priests and elders, this evangelist relates at large the history of the guarding the sepulchre, &c. the earthquake, the descent of the angel, his rolling away the stone, and the fright of the soldiers at his appearance, who shook and became as dead men. And indeed, by comparing this relation with the report given out by the soldiers, it will easily appear on which side the truth lay. For as there is nothing in the miraculous resurrection of our Lord so repugnant to reason and probability as that the disciples should be able to roll away the stone which closed up the mouth of the sepulchre, and carry off the body of Jesus, unperceived by the soldiers, who were set there on purpose to guard against such an attempt; so is it also evident, that the particulars of the soldiers' report were founded upon the circumstances of this history. In this report three things are asserted, namely, That the disciples stole the body,—that they stole it in the night,—and that they stole it while the guards were asleep. That Jesus came out of the sepulchre before the rising of the sun, Saint Matthew informs us, who says, that the earthquake, &c. happened at the time when Mary Magdalene and the other Mary set out in order to take a view of the sepulchre, which was just as the day began to break. This fact was undoubtedly too notorious for the chief priests to venture at falsifying it, and was besides favourable to the two other articles: This therefore they admitted; and taking the hint from what the soldiers told them of their having been cast into a swoon or trance (becoming like dead men) at the appearance of the angel, and consequently not having seen our Saviour come out of the sepulchre, they forged the remaining parts of this story, that his disciples came and stole him away while they slept. They took the hint, I say, of framing these two last mentioned articles from that circumstance related by Saint Matthew, of the "keepers shaking and becoming like dead men" upon the sight of the angel; for throughout this whole history there was no other besides this, upon which they could prevaricate and dispute. The stone was rolled away from the sepulchre, and the body was gone; this the chief priests were to account for, without allowing that Jesus was risen from the dead. The disciples, they said, stole it away. What! while the guards were there? Yes, the guards were asleep. With this answer they knew full well many would be satisfied, without inquiring any farther into the matter; but they could not expect that every body would be so contented; especially as they had reason to apprehend, that although the soldiers, who had taken their money, might be faithful to them, keep their secret, and attest the story they had framed for them, yet the truth might come out, by means of those whom they had not bribed; for Saint Matthew says, (xxviii. 11,) that some of the watch went into the city, "and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done." Some therefore remained behind, who probably had no share of the money which the chief priests gave to the soldiers; or if they had, in all likelihood it came too late; they had already divulged the truth, as well from an eagerness, which all men naturally have, to tell a wonderful story, as from a desire of justifying themselves for having quitted their post. The chief priests, therefore, were to guard against this event also; in order to which nothing could be more effectual than to counterwork the evidence of one part of the soldiers, by putting into the mouths of others of them a story, which without directly contradicting the facts, might yet tend to overthrow the only conclusion which the disciples of Jesus would endeavour to draw from them, and which they were so much concerned to discredit; namely, that Jesus was risen from the dead. For if the disciples and partisans of Jesus, informed by one part of the soldiers of the several circumstances related in Saint Matthew, should urge these miraculous events as so many proofs of the resurrection of their

Master, the unbelieving Jews were, by the testimony of those suborned witnesses, instructed to answer, that the earthquake and the angel were illusions or dreams;—that the soldiers had honestly confessed they were asleep, though some of them, to screen themselves from the shame or punishment such a breach of discipline deserved, pretended they were frightened into a swoon or trance by an extraordinary appearance, which they never saw, or saw only in a dream;—that while they slept, the disciples came and stole the body; for none of the soldiers, not even those who saw the most, pretend to have seen Jesus come out of the sepulchre; they are all equally ignorant by what means the body was removed; when they awaked it was missing; and it was much more likely that the disciples should have stolen it away, than that an impostor should rise from the dead. I shall not go about to confute this story; to unprejudiced and thinking people it carries its own confutation with it; but I must observe, that it is founded entirely upon the circumstance of the soldiers not having seen Jesus come out of the sepulchre,—a circumstance, that even those who told the real truth could not contradict, though they accounted for it in a different manner, by saying they were frightened into a swoon or trance at the sight of a terrible apparition, that came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. But this fact the chief priests thought it not prudent to allow, as favouring too much the opinion of Christ's being risen from the dead; neither did they think proper to reject it entirely, because they intended to turn it to their own advantage; and therefore, denying every thing that was miraculous, they construed this swoon or trance into a sleep, and with a large sum of money, and promises of impunity, hired the soldiers to confess a crime, and, by taking shame to themselves, to cover them from confusion. And so far, it must be acknowledged, they gained their point: For, until some farther proofs of the resurrection of Jesus should be produced, of which at that time they had heard nothing more, this story would undoubtedly have served to puzzle the cause, and hold people in suspense. Argument and reason indeed were wholly on the other side, but prejudice and authority were on theirs; and they were not ignorant to which the bulk of mankind were most disposed to submit.

But as no other than presumptive arguments in favour of the resurrection could be drawn from what happened to the soldiers at the sepulchre, even though the chief priest had permitted them to tell the truth, Saint Matthew, in his narration, proceeds to second and confirm those arguments by positive evidence, producing witnesses who had seen and conversed with Jesus Christ after he was risen from the dead: of these, as may be gathered from the other gospels, the number was very considerable; and very numerous were the instances of Christ's appearing after his resurrection: yet from the latter has Saint Matthew selected only two, upon each of which I beg leave to make a few remarks. The first appearance of Christ is to the women, which happened as they went to tell the disciples the message of the angel that had appeared to them in the sepulchre. I have already proved, in my observations upon Saint John, that Mary Magdalene was not one of those women; and yet the words of Saint Matthew, by the common rule of construction, seem to import the contrary. For, in the *first* place, the paragraph, "and the angel answered and said to the women," is, in our translation, connected with the preceding by the copulative *and*. 2*dly*, As in the foregoing part of this chapter no mention is made of any other woman than Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, and no hint given of any other angel than that described as descending from heaven, &c. the words in this paragraph "the angel, and the women," must be taken to relate to them. To which I answer, 1*st*, That this paragraph is not to be so connected with the preceding, as if nothing had intervened; since we shall find upon a closer examination of it, and comparing it with its parallel in Saint Mark, that between the keepers becoming like dead men, and the angels speaking to the women, Salome had joined the two Marys in their way to the sepulchre; that before they arrived there, the keepers were fled, and the angel was removed from off the stone, and was seated within the sepulchre; for which reason the particle δε, instead of being rendered by the copulative *and*, should rather be expressed by the disjunctive *but*, or *now*, as denoting an interruption in the narration, and the beginning of a new paragraph. 2*dly*, I allow the angel here spoken of to be the same with that mentioned in the foregoing verses, and the other Mary to be one of those women to whom this angel in the sepulchre, and afterwards Christ himself, appeared, and therefore admit the words "the angel and the women" in this verse relate to them. But this will not remove the difficulty, and it will be said, that either Mary Magdalene was with the other Mary in the sepulchre, or there is an inaccuracy in the expression; for the words, "*women*," and "fear not *ye*," being plural, imply there were more than one. I grant it, and Saint Mark informs us that Salome was there. But then, instead of one inaccuracy to be charged upon Saint Matthew, here are two,—Mary Magdalene, who was not present when the other Mary saw the angel, is, by the natural construction of his words, said to be there; and Salome, who was present, he takes no notice of at all. I

allow it; and let those who are given to object, make the most of it: but let it at the same time be remembered, that the greatest part of the evangelical writers were illiterate men, not skilled in the rules of eloquence, or grammatical niceties, against the laws of which it is easy to point out many faults in the writings of most of them. The other passage I proposed to make some remarks upon, affords another instance of the same kind: it is as follows:—"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted." Here the words, *some doubted*, by the strict rules of grammar, must be understood of some of the eleven disciples, who immediately before are said, when they saw Jesus, to have *worshipped* him; which, surely, is not very consistent with their doubting; neither is it very probable that a writer, however illiterate, should mean to contradict himself in the compass of three words. Another interpretation, therefore, though it be not so strictly agreeable to the grammar rules, is to be sought after, since it is a less crime to offend against grammar, than against common sense. *Some doubted*, must mean some besides the eleven, who were present upon that occasion, doubted. And, indeed, had Saint Matthew, in the former part of his narration, taken notice that others besides the eleven were there, there would have been no difficulty in understanding, even according to the strictest laws of the syntax, to whom the *some doubted* did belong; οἱ δὲ, and οἱ δὲ, set in opposition to each other, and signifying *some* and *others*, *these* and *those*, are frequently to be met with in Greek authors of the greatest authority; and no reason can be given why, according to this manner of speaking, the οἱ δὲ ἴνδεκα μαθηταὶ προσεκυνήσαν αὐτῷ — οἱ δὲ ἐδίστασαν, should not be interpreted *now*, or *then*, the eleven disciples—worshipped him, but others doubted; but that some words, to which the second οἱ δὲ (others) refer, are wanting.

But these defects, how grievous soever they may seem to grammarians, or cavillers, still more scrupulous and more punctilious than grammarians themselves, will by no means impeach the veracity of this evangelist in the opinion of those who, in making a judgment of his writings, are willing to take into the account the purpose he had in composing his gospel. He wrote, as I observed before, at the request of the Jewish converts; who, as Saint Chrysostom informs us,* came to him and besought him to leave in writing, what they had heard from him by word of mouth. His view in writing the gospel therefore to the Jews, was to repeat what he had before preached to them; in doing of which, it was not at all incumbent upon him to relate every minute circumstance, which he could not but know they were well acquainted with, and which the mention of the principal fact could not fail to recall to their memories. Thus, in the two passages above cited, (to confine myself to them,) it was not necessary for him, writing to the Jews, as it was for Saint Mark, who wrote for the Egyptian converts,† to explain the business that carried Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to the sepulchre. It was doubtless known among the Jews that they had bought spices, and went to the sepulchre, in order to embalm the body of Jesus. Neither was it worth while, for the sake of a little grammatical exactness, to interrupt the course of his narration, to acquaint them that Salome joined the two Marys as they were going to the sepulchre, and went with them thither; and that Mary Magdalene, upon seeing the stone rolled away, ran immediately to inform Peter and John of it; especially as he did not think proper to take notice of Christ's having appeared to her; and he seems to me to have mentioned Christ's appearing to the other women, only because it was connected with the principal fact, the story of his appearing in Galilee to the eleven disciples and others. The disciples going to meet their Master on a mountain in Galilee, where he had appointed them, must needs have made a great noise among the Jews; especially as it did not fall out till above a week at least after the resurrection; during which time he had appeared thrice to his disciples, (John, xxi. 14,) not including his appearances to Peter, to the two disciples, and the women. And as above twenty people were witnesses to one or other of these appearances, the fame of them was in all probability diffused, not only through Jerusalem, but throughout all Judea. It is no wonder, therefore, that upon this solemn occasion, which had been notified so long before, not only by an angel at the sepulchre, and by Christ himself on the day of his resurrection, but foretold by him even before his death; it is no wonder, I say, that upon so solemn an occasion, a great multitude besides the eleven should be got together. Saint Paul (1 Cor. xv. 6) mentions an appearance of Christ to above five hundred brethren at once, which cannot, with so good reason, be understood of any other but this in Galilee. And though out of so large an assembly some doubted, as Saint Matthew says, yet that very exception implies, that the greatest number believed; and even those who doubted, must have agreed in some common points with those who believed. They, as well as the eleven, saw Jesus, but not having had the same sensible evidences of the reality of his body, doubted whether it was himself or his appa-

* Τόμον. πρὶ Εναγγ.

† Ibid.

rition which they beheld; while the latter, who needed no farther conviction, when they saw him, fell down and worshipped. Here, then, was a fact, which could not in all its circumstances but be very notorious to the Jews, and was therefore highly proper to be mentioned by Saint Matthew. Here was a cloud of witnesses, (1 Cor. xv. 6,) the greatest part of whom were alive when Saint Paul wrote his Epistle to the Corinthians,* and therefore were certainly living when Saint Matthew composed his Gospel; and many of them probably were of the number of those converts for whom he wrote. Upon any of these suppositions, and especially the last, it is easy to account for the concise manner in which he has related this important event. It either was, or might easily be, known, with all its circumstances, by those to whom he addressed his gospel. The little attendant circumstances, therefore, it was as needless for him to mention, as it was proper to take notice of the event itself. The gospel of Christ and the faith of Christians are both vain, if Christ be not risen from the dead. It was therefore absolutely necessary for the apostles and preachers of the gospel to prove the resurrection; this they did, as well by their own testimony, as by that of others, who had seen Jesus after he was risen. Thus Saint Paul relates (1 Cor. xv. 5—8.) several appearances of Christ to Cephas and others, and closes all with his own evidence; adding, "and last of all, he was seen of me also." The evangelists, in like manner, produce many instances of the same nature. Saint Matthew speaks of two, Saint Mark of three, Saint Luke of as many, and Saint John of four; each of them selecting such as best suited with the purpose they had in view when they wrote their gospels. It is evident, at least, that Saint Matthew did so. For in what better manner could he prove to the Jews the resurrection of Christ, than by referring them to the testimony of some hundreds of their own countrymen, who had all seen him after his death, and were so well convinced of the reality of his resurrection, that they believed and embraced his doctrine? This surely was sufficient to convince those who required a number of witnesses; and was, among the Jews at least, the best answer to those who, on the credit of a few Roman soldiers, pretended that the disciples had stolen the body. Upon this fact, therefore, he seems to rest his cause, and with it closes his gospel, adding only the commission given by Christ to the apostles, and consequently to himself as one of them, "to go and teach all nations," and his promise of "being with them always, even unto the end of the world."

* Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians was written A. D. 57. See Mr Locke, ad locum. The Gospel according to Saint Matthew, about the year 53.

Thus, upon the supposition that Saint Matthew wrote his gospel for the Jewish converts, which Saint Chrysostom positively asserts, I have endeavoured to account for some defects and omissions observable in his writings, as also for his having given us the history of the guarding the sepulchre, &c. and of Christ's appearing to the eleven disciples in Galilee, of which the other evangelists make no mention. I shall now make a few remarks upon the particulars related by Saint Mark, and of which no notice is taken by Saint Matthew; but that I may not wander too far from my purpose, I shall confine them to such only as, belonging to the facts related by the latter, and having been mentioned only by the former, have induced some people to charge these two evangelists with contradicting one another. The circumstances, then, that I now intend to consider, are, 1*st*, That of the women's having bought spices, that they might come and anoint the body of Jesus; 2*dly*, That of Salome's being one of those women; and, 3*dly*, That of their entering into the sepulchre, and seeing a young man sitting on the right side clothed in a long white garment, and their being affrighted. I have already observed, that Saint Mark wrote his gospel for the use of the Egyptian Christians; some say the Roman, but whether Roman or Egyptian is not material to the present question. It is certain they were Gentiles, and strangers to the Jewish customs and religion, as may be inferred from several little explanatory notes dropt up and down in his gospel. In order, therefore, to give these strangers a perfect intelligence of the fact he thought proper to relate, it was necessary for him to begin his account with that circumstance of the women's having bought spices to anoint the body of Jesus, that they might understand what business carried them so early to the sepulchre, and see, by the preparations made by those women for the embalming the body of Jesus, and the little credit given by the apostles to the reports of those who had seen our Lord on the day of the resurrection, (which he mentions afterwards,) that his rising from the dead was an event not in the least expected by any of them, and not believed by the apostles even after such evidence, as Jesus upbraided them for not assenting to; from all which it was natural for them to conclude, that this fundamental article of their faith was neither received nor preached but upon the fullest conviction of its truth. But of this last point I shall speak more largely hereafter. For his mentioning Salome (which was the second thing proposed to be considered,) no other reason can be given, and no better, I believe, will be required, than that she was there; and as to the third circumstance, namely, that of their entering

into the sepulchre, and seeing an angel there sitting on the right side, &c. I shall shew under the second head, which I come now to consider, that though Saint Mark has been more particular in his relation of it, yet the principal points are implied in the account given by Saint Matthew.

Sect. IV.—The second head contains the circumstances in which these two evangelists agree; and they are these: 1*st*, The women's going to the sepulchre early in the morning on the first day of the week; 2*dly*, Their being told by an angel that Christ was risen, &c. I have nothing to add to the remarks I have already made upon the first; but upon the second I must observe, that the several particulars put into the mouth of this angel at the sepulchre by these two evangelists are precisely the same, except the addition of Peter's name inserted by Saint Mark, doubtless for some particular reason, which it is no wonder we should not be able to discover at this great distance of time. This single variation will not, I presume, be thought sufficient to overturn the conclusion I would draw from the exact agreement of all the other particulars, that the fact related by these two sacred writers is the same; especially if it be considered, that the circumstance of the angel's being within the sepulchre, expressly mentioned by Saint Mark, is so far from being contradicted by Saint Matthew, as some have imagined, that it is plainly implied by these words, "He is not here. Come," (δεῦτε, which might more properly be translated, Come hither,) "see the place where the Lord lay." As is also that other circumstance, of the women's entering into the sepulchre, by the Greek term ἐξελθοῦσαι, which should have been rendered, "they went out," instead of, "they departed," as it is in the parallel passage in Saint Mark; to which let me farther add, that the description of the angel's clothing, which was a long white garment according to Saint Mark, corresponds with the only particular relating to it taken notice of by Saint Matthew, which was its whiteness: "His raiment was white as snow." In the latter, indeed, this angel is also painted with a countenance like lightning, and the keepers are said to have trembled, &c. for fear of him. The purpose of this angel's descending from heaven, seems to have been not only to roll away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, that the women who were on their way thither might have free entrance into it, but also to fright away the soldiers, who were set to guard it; and who, had they continued there, would certainly not have permitted the disciples of Jesus to have made the necessary inquiries for their conviction, could it be supposed that either they or the women would have attempted to enter into the sepulchre while it was surrounded by a Roman guard. For this end it is not unreasonable to suppose he might not only raise an earthquake, but assume a countenance of terror, and after it was accomplished, put on the milder appearance of a young man, in which form the women, as Saint Mark says, saw him sitting within the sepulchre, on the right side. This supposition, I say, is neither unreasonable nor presumptuous; for, although to argue from the event to the design or intention may, in judging of human affairs, be deceitful or precarious, yet, in the actions of God, the supreme disposer of all events, it is most certain and conclusive. Thus, in the present case, the sudden appearance of an angel from heaven, attended by an earthquake;* his removing by his single strength a stone which, according to Beza's copy of Saint Luke's gospel, twenty men could hardly roll; his taking his station upon it, and from thence, with a countenance like lightning, blazing and flashing amid the darkness of the night, were circumstances so full of terror and amazement, that they could not fail of producing, even in the hearts of Roman soldiers, the consternation mentioned by the evangelist, and driving them from a post which a divinity (for so, according to their way of thinking and speaking, they must have styled the angel) had now taken possession of. A cause so fitted to produce such an effect, is an argument of its being intended to produce it; and the intention being answered by the event, is a sufficient reason for varying afterwards the manner of proceeding. Accordingly, the angel, after he had removed the stone, and frighted away the keepers from the sepulchre, quitted his station on the outside, put off his terrors, and entering into the sepulchre, sat there in the form of a young man, to acquaint the women that Jesus of Nazareth, whom they sought in the grave, was risen from the dead. That the angel was not seen by the women sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, is evident not only from the silence of all the evangelists, with regard to such an appearance, but also from what has already been observed concerning Mary Magdalene, who, though she saw the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, yet saw no angel, as I shewed above. Besides, had the angel remained sitting on the stone without the sepulchre, with all his terrors about him, he would, in all probability, by frightening away the women and disciples as well as the soldiers, have prevented those visits to the sepulchre, which he came on purpose to facilitate. It was necessary, therefore, either that he should not appear at all to the women, or that he should appear within the sepulchre; and in a form which, although more than human, might, however, not be so terrible as

* See Whiston on the Resurrection, &c. according to Beza, &c.

to deprive them of their senses, and render them incapable of hearing, certainly of remembering, that message which he commanded them to deliver to the disciples; from all which considerations it may fairly be concluded, that the appearance of the angel without the sepulchre, mentioned by Saint Matthew, was to the keepers only; and that, when he was seen by the women, he was within the sepulchre, as Saint Mark expressly says, and as the words above-cited from Saint Matthew strongly imply; so that these two evangelists agree in relating not only the words spoken by the angel, but the principal, and, as it were, characteristical circumstances of the fact, which, from this agreement, I would infer to be one and the same. The like agreement is also to be found in their account of the terror of the women upon seeing the angel, their speedy flight from the sepulchre, and the disorder and confusion which so extraordinary an event occasioned in their minds; a confused and troubled mixture of terror, astonishment, and joy, which, according to Saint Mark, was so great as to prevent their telling what had happened to those they met upon the way; so must we understand, "Neither said they any thing to any man;" for it is not to be imagined that they never opened their lips about it. Their silence, doubtless, ended with the cause of it, namely, their terror and amazement; and these, in all probability, vanished upon their seeing Christ himself, who, as Saint Matthew hath informed us, met them as they were going to tell the disciples the message of the angel, accosted them with an All hail! and bade them dismiss their fears. But of this more hereafter.

Sect. V.—I come now, under the third head, to consider those particulars in which these two evangelists are thought to clash and disagree with each other. But so many of these have been already examined, and, as I hope, reconciled, under the two preceding divisions, that there remains to be discussed in this but one single point, arising from the seeming different accounts of the time when the women came to the sepulchre. Saint Matthew says, that "Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the sepulchre, as it began to dawn;" Saint Mark, "They came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun," to which I must add Saint John, who, speaking of the same persons and the same fact, says, they came when it was yet dark. The σκοτίας ἔτι οὔσης of the latter, and the τῇ ἐπιφωσκούσῃ of Saint Matthew, that signifying it being yet dark, and this, the day beginning to dawn, will, I believe, without any difficulty, be allowed to denote the same point of time, namely, the ending of the night, and the beginning of the day; the only question therefore is, how this can be reconciled with the time mentioned by Saint Mark, namely, the rising of the sun; but this question, how perplexing soever it may appear at first sight, is easily resolved only by supposing that Saint Matthew, and with him Saint John, speaks of the women's setting out, and Saint Mark of their arrival at the sepulchre. And indeed the order of Saint Matthew's narration requires that his words should be understood to signify the time of their setting out; otherwise, all that is related of the earthquake, the descent of the angel, &c. must be thrown into a parenthesis, which very much disturbs the series of the story, and introduces much greater harshness into the construction than any avoided by it. Nay, for my own part, I confess I can see no harshness in the interpretation now contended for. The Greek word ἦλθε, in Saint Matthew, might as well have been translated *went* as *came*, the verb ἔρχομαι signifying both *to go* and *to come*, and consequently being capable of either sense, according as the context shall require. That in Saint Matthew, as I said before, requires us to take the word ἦλθε in the former for the sake of order, and for another reason which I shall now explain. The principal fact, upon the account of which the whole story of the women's going to the sepulchre seems to have been related, is the resurrection of Christ, and this fact is absolutely without a date, if the words of Saint Matthew are to be understood to denote the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre. When I say without a date, I mean, that it does not appear from any thing in Saint Matthew or the other evangelists, what hour of that night this great event happened. All the information they give us is, that when the women came to the sepulchre, they were told by angels he was risen; but on the contrary, by understanding Saint Matthew to speak of the time of Mary Magdalene's setting out to take a view of the sepulchre, we have the date of the resurrection settled, and know precisely that Christ rose from the dead between the dawning of the day and the sun-rising. And can any substantial reason be assigned why Saint Matthew, having thought fit to enter into so circumstantial an account of the resurrection, should omit the date of so important a fact; or that, not intending to mark it by mentioning the time of the women's going to the sepulchre, he should place that fact before another, which, in order of time, was prior to it? All these considerations therefore are, in my opinion, powerful arguments for understanding this passage of Saint Matthew in the sense above expressed. About Saint Mark's meaning there is no dispute. He certainly intended to express the time of the women's arrival at the sepulchre. His words cannot be taken in any other sense. Those

of Saint John are limited to the same interpretation with those of Saint Matthew, it having been allowed before that they both speak of the same point of time.

Before I quit the examination of these evangelists, I beg leave to add a few remarks, on occasion of a word made use of in this place both by Mark and John, the explaining of which will set in a proper light some passages, that have not hitherto been brought sufficiently in view. The word I mean is πρωΐ, which, having by our translators been rendered by the English word "early," hath been limited to that sense only; and yet it has a farther signification, and imports not *maturè** only, but *præmaturè, ante constitutum tempus;* not only "early," but "over-early, before the appointed time;" and in this sense I am persuaded it was here used by the evangelists. For had they intended to denote only the time of the women's setting out, and arriving at the sepulchre, the descriptive phrases, "while it was yet dark," and "at the rising of the sun," would have been sufficient, and the more general word "early" absolutely redundant; whereas in the other sense it is very significant, and greatly tends to illustrate and confirm what I hope more fully to make appear by comparing the several parts of this history together, that the women came at different times to the sepulchre, and not all at once, as has been imagined. The business that carried them all thither was to pay their last respects to their deceased master, by embalming his body; for which end they had bought and prepared unguents and spices, but were obliged to defer their pious work by the coming on of the Sabbath, upon which day they rested, says Saint Luke, according to the commandment. On the eve of the Sabbath, therefore, when they parted, and each retired to their several habitations, it is most natural to suppose that they agreed to meet upon a certain hour at the sepulchre; and as the errand upon which they were employed required day light, the hour agreed on in all probability was soon after the rising of the sun; their apprehension of the Jews, as well as their zeal to their master prompting them to take the earliest opportunity. But Mary Magdalene, it seems, whether from a natural eagerness of temper, or a more ardent affection for her Lord, to whom she had the greatest obligations, or from a higher cause, set out together with the other Mary, just as the day began to break, in order to take a view of the sepulchre; and having either called upon Salome, or joined her in the way, came thither together with her, πρωΐ, "early," before the time agreed on. This, in my opinion, is a very natural account of the whole matter, and points out the importance of these remarkable expressions, "went to see the sepulchre," in Saint Matthew, and "who shall roll away the stone for us," in Saint Mark. For, 1*st*, The reason of the two Marys setting out so early is here assigned: they went to take a view of the sepulchre, that is, in general, to see if all things were in the same condition in which they had left them two days before, that if in that interval any thing extraordinary had happened, they might report it to their companions, and in conjunction with them take their measures accordingly. Hence is it also evident, in the second place, why they were so few in number; they came to view the sepulchre, and came before the time appointed for their meeting. 2*dly*, As upon the present supposition there were but three women, who came first to the sepulchre, their design in coming so early could be no other than that expressed by Saint Matthew; for they knew that they themselves were not able to roll away the stone, which two of them at least (the two Marys) had seen placed there by Joseph of Arimathea, Mark, xv. 47, and which they knew could not be removed without a greater number of hands. Accordingly, "as they drew near, they said among themselves, Who shall roll away the stone for us, from the door of the sepulchre?" These words intimate that one of their chief views in coming to see the sepulchre was to survey this stone, which closed up the entrance into it, and to consider whether they and the other women, who were to meet them there, were by themselves able to remove it; or whether they must have recourse to the assistance of others. For, "Who shall roll away the stone for us?" implies a sense of their own inability, and of the necessity of calling in others; after which the only thing to be considered was whom and how many? This therefore was the point under deliberation when they approached the sepulchre. 3*dly*, It is also plain from these words, that they did not expect to find any body there, and consequently that they knew nothing of the guard, which the high priest had set to watch the sepulchre; of which, had they received any intelligence, they would hardly have ventured to come at all, or would not have deliberated about rolling away the stone, as the only or greatest difficulty.

* Vid. Scapulæ Lexicon.

Sect. VI.—Luke, xxiv. 1—12. "Now upon the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they came unto the sepulchre, bringing the spices which they had prepared, and certain others with them. And they found the stone rolled away from the sepulchre. And they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus. And it came to pass as they were much perplexed thereabout, behold two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid, and

bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? he is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and other women that were with them, which told these things unto the apostles. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not. Then arose Peter and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed wondering in himself at that which was come to pass."

In this relation of Saint Luke's are many particulars that differ greatly from those mentioned by the other evangelists. For, 1*st*, The women entering into the sepulchre see neither angel nor angels: and, 2*dly*, Not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they fall into great perplexity. 3*dly*, In the midst of this perplexity there sood by them two men in shining garments; who, 4*thly*, Say to them words very different from those spoken by the angel in Saint Matthew and Saint Mark. 5*thly*, When those women return from the sepulchre, and tell all these things unto the eleven and all the rest, Saint Peter is made to be present, and upon their report to rise immediately and run to the sepulchre, &c. These marks of difference, one would imagine, were sufficient to keep any one from confounding the stories above cited of Joanna and Saint Peter, with those concerning the Marys and that disciple related in the other gospels; especially as they have been observed and acknowledged as well by the Christian as the infidel; the latter of whom hath produced them to support the charge of inconsistency and contradiction, which he hath endeavoured to fix upon the sacred writers; while the former, seduced and dazzled by some few points of resemblance, hath agreed with him in allowing these different facts to be the same; but denying his conclusion, hath laboured to reconcile the inconsistencies, by rules and methods of interpretation which, as they are strained and unnatural, tend only to discover the greatness of his embarrassment. Whereas the true way, in my opinion, of answering this charge, is to shew that it is founded upon a mistake, by shewing that the evangelists relate different, but not inconsistent facts; and that instead of clashing and disagreeing, they mutually confirm, illustrate, and support each other's evidence. This therefore I shall now endeavour to do, by making a few remarks upon the several articles above mentioned. I shall begin with that relating to Saint Peter, because the settling of that will settle many other points. "Then arose Peter, and ran unto the sepulchre, and stooping down he beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." This fact has always been taken to be the same with that related by Saint John, from which, however, it differs, among other things, in this very material circumstance, namely, That whereas Saint John expressly says, that Peter went into the sepulchre, while he (John) who got thither first, contented himself with barely stooping down, and looking into it, Saint Luke, in the passage before us, tells us, that Peter stooping down, and looking in, beheld the linen clothes laid by themselves, and departed. The word παρακύψας (stooping down and looking in) used by both evangelists, and in the latter applied only to Saint Peter, in the former only to Saint John, is in his gospel plainly distinguished from the word εἰσῆλθεν (entered in) and set in direct opposition to it; and that not by the force of etymology and construction only, but by some particulars resulting from the actions signified by those two words, which prove them to be distinct and different from each other. He who went into the sepulchre, saw more than he who, staying without, only stooped down and looked in. Thus Peter and John, when they entered into the sepulchre, saw not only the linen clothes lie, but the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself; but when they only stooped down and looked in, they could see only the linen clothes, as is evident from the words of Saint John; the whole passage runs thus, "Peter therefore went forth, and that other disciple, and came to the sepulchre, and the other disciple, did out-run Peter, and came first to the sepulchre, and he stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin, that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, and saw," &c. Now these two actions being by these marks as clearly distinguished from each other in Saint John, as the different places where they were performed can be by the terms entrance, and inside of the sepulchre, and as so distinguished having been separately performed by that apostle, they must also necessarily be taken for separate and distinct actions, when related of Saint Peter. And if it be reasonable to conclude from Saint John's account that Peter, when he came with him to the sepulchre did

not stop at the entrance, "stoop down and look in," but that he entered into it; it is no less reasonable to conclude from Saint Luke's narration, that when he came, at the time mentioned by him, he did not enter in, but stooping down, beheld the linen clothes and departed, especially if the force of the Greek word μόνα be considered, and the whole passage rendered, as it ought to have been, beheld the linen clothes only lying, τὰ ὀθόνια κείμενα μόνα. From all which it evidently follows, that the fact here related of Saint Peter, and that related of him by Saint John, are separate and distinct facts, and not one and the same, as has been imagined. And as the facts were different, so did they take their rise from two different occasions: or, in other words, as it is evident, from all that has been just now said, that Peter went twice to the sepulchre, so are there two distinct reasons for his so doing assigned in the gospels of Luke and John, namely, the report of Mary Magdalene, and that of Joanna and the other women. By the former having been told that the body of Jesus was taken out of the sepulchre, he ran in great haste to examine into the truth of that account, and in pursuance of this intent entered into the sepulchre, that he might receive a thorough satisfaction upon that point. In the latter were two additional circumstances of importance sufficient to awaken the curiosity of a less zealous disciple than Saint Peter, whose affection for his Lord was like his natural temper, fervent and impetuous. When he heard therefore from Joanna and the other women of a vision of angels, who had appeared to them at the sepulchre, and informed them that Christ was risen, can we wonder at his running thither a second time, in hopes of receiving some confirmation of the truth of that report which, though treated by the rest of the apostles as an idle tale, he certainly gave credit to, as the whole tenor of this passage implies? I say a second time, because had he gone for the first time, upon this report of Joanna's, he could have had no inducement to have gone to the sepulchre a second time from any thing he could learn from the first report made by Mary Magdalene, whose account contained nothing but what was implied in that given by Joanna and the other women. His behaviour also upon this occasion, when he only stooped down and looked into the sepulchre, so different from the former, when he entered into it, is very rational, and consonant with the purpose of this second visit, which was, to see if the angels who had appeared to the women at the sepulchre were still there; this could as well be discovered by looking, as by going, into the sepulchre, as is plain from the story of Mary Magdalene, who, stooping down and looking in, saw two angels sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had lain, as Saint John tells us.

Having now, as I hope, proved that this visit of Saint Peter's to the sepulchre, mentioned by Saint Luke, must have been his second visit, I have cleared this passage from two objections that lay against it: one, that it did not agree with the relation given by Saint John; and the other, that it disturbed and confounded the whole order of Saint Luke's narration: So that, notwithstanding this verse is wanting both in the Greek and Latin copies of Beza, there is no reason for rejecting it, as some have proposed.

This point being settled, I beg leave to make a few inferences from it, in order to explain some passages in the preceding verses of this chapter.

First then, It is plain from this and the ninth verse, that Saint Peter, after he had been with Saint John and Mary Magdalene at the sepulchre, was now got together with the other apostles and disciples, whom in all probability he and John had assembled upon the occasion of Mary Magdalene's report. Peter, I say, and John, had in all probability assembled the other disciples and apostles to inform them of what they had heard from Mary Magdalene, and of their having been themselves at the sepulchre to examine into the truth of her report. For it is not to be imagined, that these apostles would not have immediately communicated to the rest an event of so much consequence to them all, as that of the Lord's body being missing from the sepulchre. And as we now find them gathered together, and Peter with them, it is no unnatural supposition that they had been summoned thither by John and Peter. At least, their meeting together so early in the morning is this way accounted for. Here then we see the reason of Saint Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary among those which told these things to the apostles. For although these two women were not with Joanna and her set, and consequently could not have joined with them in relating to the apostles the vision of the two angels, &c. yet, as the account of their having found the stone rolled away, and the body of Jesus missing, had been reported from them by Peter and John to the other apostles, before the return of Joanna from the sepulchre, Saint Luke thought fit to set them down as evidences of some of the facts related by him; and indeed it was very proper to produce the testimony of the two Marys concerning the stone's being rolled away, and the body gone, because they first went to the sepulchre, and first gave an account of those two particulars to the apostles. I here join the other Mary with Mary Magdalene; for though I think it is pretty plain from Saint John, that she alone brought this account,

yet it is remarkable, that in her narration she says, "*We* know not where they have laid him," speaking, as it were, in the name of the other Mary and her own; and doubtless she did not omit to acquaint them that the other Mary came with her to the sepulchre; so that this report, though made by Mary Magdalene alone, may fairly be taken for the joint report of the two Marys, and was probably styled so by Peter and John, and, therefore, represented as such by Saint Luke in the passage before us.

Secondly, From hence also I infer, that the reports of the women were made separately, and at different times. For if Peter went twice to the sepulchre, there must have been two distinct reasons for his so doing, which reasons I have shewn to be the reports of Mary Magdalene and Joanna. And as there was a considerable interval between his first and second visit, a proportionable space of time must have intervened between the two reports. After Mary Magdalene's he had been at the sepulchre, had returned from thence to his own home, and was now got with the other apostles and disciples, whom, as I said, he and John had in all probability called together, before Joanna and the women with her came to make theirs.

Thirdly, As the reports were made at different times, and by different women; as the facts reported were different, and said to have happened all in the same place, namely, at the sepulchre; and as these facts must of consequence have happened at different times; it follows, that the women, who reported those facts as happening in their presence, must have been at the sepulchre at different times. For had they been all present at each of these events, no reason can be given for their differing so widely in their relations, and pretty difficult will it be to account for their varying so much as to the time of making their reports. Here then is a strong argument in favour of what I have before advanced concerning the women's coming at different times to the sepulchre, and particularly about the Marys coming thither earlier than the rest. The reason for their so doing I have already pointed out in my observations upon Saint Mark, and have shewn, that upon the supposition of that reason's being the true one, their whole conduct was proper and consistent; which leads me to consider that of Joanna and the other women, who came somewhat later, and with another purpose, to the sepulchre. The former came to take a view or survey of the sepulchre, as Saint Matthew expressly says; the latter came to embalm or anoint the Lord's body, and for that end not only brought the spices which they had prepared, but were also accompanied by other women. Other women must mean some besides those who followed Jesus from Galilee, of whom alone Saint Luke speaks in the former part of this verse, and the latter part of the preceding chapter. By these, therefore, as contradistinguished from the Galilean women, he probably means the women of Jerusalem, a great company of whom followed Jesus as he was going to his crucifixion, bewailing and lamenting him. [See the 27th verse of the preceding chapter.] But what number of them went upon this occasion with the women of Galilee, is not any where said; neither of these are any named besides Joanna, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, though many others followed Jesus from Galilee to Jerusalem, as both Saint Matthew (xxvii. 55) and Saint Mark (xv. 41) inform us, and were present at the crucifixion. It is therefore very probable that most, if not all of those who were wont to minister to him in Galilee, who attended him to Jerusalem, and accompanied him even to Mount Calvary, contributed to this pious office of embalming their Master's body, either by buying and preparing the unguents and spices, and carrying them to the sepulchre, or by going to assist their companions in embalming the body and rolling away the stone; for which purpose I suppose the women of Jerusalem principally attended, since none of them seem to have made any purchase of spices for embalming the body; and for this last purpose it is farther probable they thought their numbers sufficient. Accordingly, we do not find them saying among themselves, "Who shall roll away the stone for us," as the Marys did; nor do we find the Marys bringing the spices which they had bought, as is here related of Joanna and those with her; and, doubtless, the evangelists had a meaning in their use and application of these expressions, the former of which is very agreeable to the purpose that carried the Marys so early to the sepulchre, as is the latter to that of Joanna, who, coming to embalm the body, brought with her all that was necessary for performing that business,—namely, the spices, and other women to assist her in rolling away the stone, &c. The different conduct of the women, therefore, indicates their several purposes in going to the sepulchre, and tends to confirm what I have been all along labouring to prove, that they went thither at different times, and not all together.

And as their having had different motives was the cause of their going at different times, and dividing themselves into different companies, so from their coming to the sepulchre in different bodies, sprang a subdivision of one of those companies, which I shall now explain. The two Marys and Salome came first to the sepulchre, and as they drew near, lifting up their eyes, perceived that the stone,

which was very great, was rolled away from the entrance: upon sight of which Mary Magdalene, concluding that the body of Jesus was taken away, ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with it, leaving her two companions at the sepulchre. That she was alone when she came to those two apostles, is strongly implied by the whole tenor of that passage in Saint John, where this fact is related, as I have already observed; and that she left her companions at the sepulchre, is as evident from what Saint Mark says of their entering into the sepulchre, &c. The reason of which probably was this, she knew that Joanna and her company would not be long before they came thither, and might therefore think it proper to desire the other Mary and Salome to wait for them there, to inform them that they had found the stone rolled away, &c. and that she was gone to acquaint Peter and John with it. But whether this, or any other reason was the cause of Mary Magdalene's going by herself to Peter and John, and the other two women's staying behind at the sepulchre, is not very material to inquire; all I contend for is, that so it was; and that hence arose a subdivision of this company, that gave occasion to two appearances of angels, and as many of Christ, and consequently multiplied the proofs and witnesses of the resurrection.

I hope by this time it is sufficiently evident, that the facts related by the several women to the apostles were different and distinct facts; and, therefore, I think it unnecessary to enter into any farther argument upon that point. And although, in the beginning of my observations upon this chapter of Saint Luke, I noted some particulars wherein this story of Joanna differs from that of the other women, and promised to make some remarks upon them; yet, for the last mentioned reason, I dare say I shall be easily acquitted of my promise, especially as those marks of difference are so obvious and striking, that little more need be done than pointing them out to observation. I must, however, beg leave to observe, that the position relating to the angels appearing and disappearing as they thought proper, laid down in my remarks upon Saint John, is farther proved by the manner of their appearing mentioned here in Saint Luke, which is implied to have been sudden, not only by the force and import of the expression, but by the remarkable circumstance of their not being seen by the women, at their entering into the sepulchre.

Sect. VII.—Though the following passage of this chapter relating to Christ's appearance to the two disciples at Emmaus hath been already produced in part, yet I think it proper to insert it entire in this place, that by the reader's having it all before him at once, he may be the better able to judge of the observation I intend to make upon it.

Luke, xxiv. 13—35. "And behold two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass, as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

Whoever reads this story over with any degree of attention, and considers the subject of the conversation which our Saviour held with the two disciples upon the road to Emmaus, will perceive that it must have arisen from what the angels had said to the women related in the preceding verses of this chapter. To set this matter in the clearest light, we will put the several parts together. The angels said to the women who came to embalm the body of Jesus, "He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again." The words of our Saviour referred to by the angels are these, (Luke, xviii. 31—33,) "Then he took unto him the twelve, and said unto them, behold we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man shall be accomplished. For he shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on; and they shall scourge him, and put him to death, and the third day he shall rise again." The words of the angels these two disciples had heard from the women, before they left Jerusalem; and as they were walking towards Emmaus, and talking over all the wonderful things that had come to pass, they seem at last to have fallen into a debate upon the subject of these words, and the prophecies referred to by them, just as our Saviour drew near. That they were engaged in some argument or disquisition, I infer not only from the Greek word συζητεῖν, which signifies to discuss, examine, or inquire together; but from our Saviour's question, who apparently having overheard some part of their discourse, asks them, Τίνες οἱ λόγοι οὗτοι οὓς ἀντιβάλλετε πρὸς ἀλλήλους; "What arguments are these, that ye are debating one with another, while ye walk and are sad?" The subject of their argument appears in their answer to this question, in which they give him to understand that they were reasoning upon the things that had come to pass concerning Jesus of Nazareth, "whom," say they, alluding plainly to the words of the angels, "the chief priests and our rulers have delivered to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. And hence arises all our sadness, for we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and over and above all these things, to-day is the third day since these things were done," (another allusion to the words of the angels;) "and to-day some women of our company astonished us with an account of their having been early at the sepulchre, and, not finding the body of Jesus, had been there told by angels that he was risen from the dead. And some of our companions, running immediately to the sepulchre, found the report of the women to be true; but him they saw not." The sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Jesus were the subjects of their debates, foretold, as the angels bade them remember, out of the prophets, by Christ himself; and the scope of their inquiry was, how to reconcile these events with the prophecies to which they were referred. Part of them they had seen accomplished in the sufferings and death of Christ; and that ought to have assured them of the accomplishment of the other part: but either from not understanding, or from a backwardness in believing all that the prophets had said, they stopped short of this conclusion. For this ignorance and backwardness Christ reproves them; asks them whether (according to the prophets) "Christ ought not to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory?" that is, to rise again; and then "beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounds to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." The connection is visible: at the beginning of the chapter the angels refer the disciples for the proof of the resurrection to the prophets; and here, Christ joining two of those disciples on the road, is, by their discourse upon that subject, led to explain those prophecies, and prove from them that the Messiah was certainly risen from the dead. And in the like manner is the remaining part of this chapter to the 46th verse, connected with this and the preceding. For these two disciples, returning to Jerusalem, relate to the apostles and the rest, whom they found gathered together, what had passed between Christ and them upon the road to Emmaus; and while they were speaking Christ himself appears, and, after having given them sensible proofs of his being risen from the dead, reminds them, as the angel had done, of the words which he spake unto them in Galilee, saying, "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures; and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day."

The connection and dependence of the several parts of this chapter upon each other, point out to us the reason that induced Saint Luke to relate the vision of the two angels to Joanna and the other women; and at the same time prove that vision to be distinct and different from those seen by the Marys: each of which had, in like manner, its separate and peculiar reference to other facts, as will presently be seen.

Sect. VIII. I shall now proceed to consider the appearances of Christ to the women, on

the day of his resurrection ; which, like those of the angels, have also been confounded, and from the same cause, namely, from the want of attending with due care to the several circumstances, by which they are plainly distinguished from each other. And, 1*st*, I observe, that these appearances of Christ are so connected with the appearances of the angels, that these having been proved to be distinct, it follows that those are distinct also. 2*dly*, Saint Mark expressly tells us, that Christ appeared first to Mary Magdalene, which, according to all propriety of speech, implies that she was alone at the time of that appearance, as I have said once before. But I think it best to set down the passages themselves, of Saint John and Saint Matthew, in which these appearances are related. John, xx. 11—18, " But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping ; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white, sitting, the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain ; and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had said thus, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou ? Whom seekest thou ? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary ! She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni, which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father : but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God. Mary Magdalene came and told the disciples that she had seen the Lord, and that he had spoken these things unto her." Matt. xxviii. 9, 10, " And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail ! And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid : Go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me."

After having produced these two passages, it would be wasting both time and words to go about to prove the appearances therein mentioned to be different. Compare them, and you will find they disagree in every circumstance ; in the place, the persons, the actions, and the words : of which last I must observe, that they refer to two different events, namely, the ascension of Christ into heaven, and his meeting his disciples in Galilee, of which they were prophecies, and by which they, and consequently these appearances of Christ, were not long after verified, though discredited at first, and treated as idle tales.

I have now gone over the several particulars of the history of the resurrection related in the four evangelists, have examined them with all the attention I am capable of, and with a sincere desire of discovering and embracing the truth ; and have, as I think, made out the following points, 1*st*, That the women came at different times, and in different companies, to the sepulchre. 2*dly*, That there were several distinct appearances of angels. 3*dly*, That the angels were not always visible, but appeared and disappeared as they thought proper. 4*thly*, That these several facts were reported to the apostles at different times, and by different women. 5*thly*, That there were two distinct appearances of Christ to the women. And, 6*thly*, That Saint Peter was twice at the sepulchre. These points being once established, all the objections against this part of the gospel history, as contradictory and inconsistent, entirely vanish and come to nought. That very learned and ingenious men have been embarrassed by these objections, is some excuse for those who first started them, and those who have lately insisted upon them. Their having now received an answer, (if that will be allowed), is a clear proof that it was always possible to answer them, even with a very moderate share of common sense and learning. The nature of the answer itself, which is founded upon the usual, obvious, plain sense of the words, without putting any force, either upon the particular expressions, or the general construction of the several passages, is an evidence of what I now say. So that I must needs acknowledge that its having been so long missed, is matter of far greater surprise, than its having been hit upon now.

I shall here beg leave to subjoin a few observations of a very eminent and judicious person, to whose inspection I submitted these papers ; and in whose approbation of them I have great reason to pride myself. They are as follows :—

" To prove the appearances at the sepulchre to be different, and made to different persons, two things concur.

" I. The several accounts as given by the evangelists.

" II. The circumstances which attended the case.

" The first point is fully considered ; and of the second it is very justly remarked, that the women having agreed to be early at the sepulchre, it fell out naturally, 'that some came before others.' Now there being at the place of meeting something to terrify them as fast as they arrived, it accounts also for their dispersion, and their not meeting at all in one body. It may help likewise to account for the manner of delivering their messages

to the apostles; supposing the messages not delivered in the same order, in point of time, as the appearances happened. For the most terrified might be the latest reporters, though they received their orders first. Which observation is favoured by Saint Mark's οὐδενὶ οὐδὲν εἶπον, 'neither said they any thing to any man.'

"The difficulty upon stating the appearances to be different, and made to different persons, arises chiefly from Mary Magdalene being mentioned as present by every evangelist: but there seems to be this reason for it; she was at the head of the women, and the chief of those who attended our Lord, and followed him from Galilee; and 'Mary Magdalene and the women with her,' denotes the women who came from Galilee, in the same manner that the eleven denotes the apostles.

"Three evangelists say expressly that many women were present at the crucifixion: had it been left so generally, we should have had no account who they were. Therefore Saint Matthew, xxvii. 56, adds, ἐν αἷς ἦν, 'among whom was Mary Magdalene,' &c. So it is again, Mark, xv. 40. Saint Luke having said, in general terms, that the women, who followed from Galilee, were spectators of the crucifixion, goes on with the account, (xxiv. 1,) of their coming to the sepulchre, seeing angels, and returning to tell the eleven and all the rest. But to give credit to their report, and to correct the omission in not describing them before, he tells us who they were. And how does he describe them? Why, by saying they were of the company of Mary Magdalene: Ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ, &c. xxiv. 10, which verse admits, perhaps requires, a different reading from that in our translation.

"These considerations seem to account for her being mentioned in the transactions of these women, though not always present herself. Saint Luke says, (xxiv. 1,) that besides the women from Galilee, there were other women there. To distinguish those, who made the report to the disciples, from the other women, he adds the words already referred to.*

"It is remarkable that Saint Mark says of the women mentioned by him, no more than that they had bought spices to anoint the body; enough to shew with what intent they went to the tomb; that they had any spices with them he does not say. But Saint Luke says of those he mentions, that they actually brought with them the spices; and not only so, but that they had prepared them; that is, made them fit for the use intended. The several drugs were bought singly, each by itself at the shop, and were necessarily to be mixed, or melted together for use: and I imagine that, though all the women joined in buying the spices, yet the care of getting and preparing them was left particularly to the women mentioned by Saint Luke; and as they were Galileans, and not at home at Jerusalem, and probably unacquainted with the method of embalming bodies, that they employed some inhabitants of the place to buy and prepare the spices, and to go with them to apply them to the body; and these are the τινες σὺν αὐταῖς, others with them, in Saint Luke.

"This will account for Saint Matthew saying nothing of spices — for they had none with them. They set out before those, who were to bring the spices, to see what condition the sepulchre was in; and their business is properly expressed by θεωρῆσαι τὸν τάφον, 'to see the sepulchre.'

"Mary Magdalene was with the first (Matt. and Mark) who went to the sepulchre; but I think she did not go to the sepulchre then: as soon as she was in sight of the place, lifting up her eyes (ἀναβλέψασα, Mark, xvi. 4,) and seeing the stone removed, she turned instantly (τρέχει οὖν, John, xx. 2,) to tell Peter and John. And it is plain by her behaviour at her second going, that she had no share in the fright that seized those who went on after she left them."

Sect. IX. — Having thus cleared the way, I shall now set down the several incidents of this wonderful event, in the order in which, according to the foregoing observations, they

* The words of Saint Luke deserves a particular examination; they run thus in the Greek: — Καὶ ὑποστρέψασαι ἀπὸ τοῦ μνημείου ἀπήγγειλαν ταῦτα πάντα τοῖς ἕνδεκα καὶ πᾶσι τοῖς λοιποῖς· Ἦσαν δὲ ἡ Μαγδαληνὴ Μαρία καὶ Ἰωάννα καὶ Μαρία Ἰακώβου, καὶ αἱ λοιπαὶ σὺν αὐταῖς, αἱ ἔλεγον πρὸς τοὺς ἀποστόλους ταῦτα. In English, "And turning back from the sepulchre, they told all these things to the eleven, and to all the rest. Now, they who related these things to the apostles, were Mary Magdalene, and Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, and the rest with them, that is, of their company." As the account of the proceedings of the Galilean women begins in the foregoing chapter, and is carried on without any interruption to the 9th verse of this chapter; so that the several verbs occurring in this and the preceding verses are all governed by the same nominative case, namely, γυναῖκες; in verse 55 of the 23d chapter, it is evident that ταῦτα πάντα, all these things, must be taken to extend to all the particulars mentioned in that account, and cannot be confined to the transactions of the sepulchre only; and the same observation holds equally to the ταῦτα in the following verse. The utmost, therefore, that can be inferred from Saint Luke's naming Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, is, that they were concerned in some or other of these transactions, and joined in relating some of these things to the apostles; which is true, for they sat over against the sepulchre, when Joseph laid in it the body of the Lord, Matt. xxvii. 61. "And beheld where he was laid," Mark, xv. 47. They also "had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint him," Mark, xvi. 1. And were the first who came to the sepulchre that morning, and brought the first account of the body's being missing, Matt. and Mark. And though by comparing the accounts given by the other evangelists with this of Saint Luke, it appears that neither of these women went with Joanna and her company to the sepulchre, yet as they were Galilean women, and bore a part, and a principal part too, in what the women of Galilee were then chiefly employed about, namely, the care of embalming the body of Jesus, there is certainly no impropriety in Saint Luke's naming them with Joanna and the rest, as he does in the end of the general and collective account he gives of what was reported and done by the Galilean women. Neither does his naming them appropriate to them any particular part of that general account, any more than his not naming them would have excluded them from their share of those transactions, and the report then made to the apostles. In this case they would have been included in the general terms of Galilean women; as by being named, they are distinguished and marked as the most eminent persons and leaders of that company of women who followed Jesus from Galilee, &c.

seem to have arisen; after premising that our Saviour Christ was crucified on a Friday, (the preparation, or the day before the Jewish Sabbath,) gave up the ghost about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day, and was buried that evening, before the commencement of the Sabbath, which among the Jews was always reckoned to begin from the first appearance of the stars on Friday evening, and to end at the appearance of them again on the day we call Saturday. That some time, and most probably towards the close of the Sabbath, after the religious duties of the day were over, the chief priests obtained of Pilate, the Roman governor, a guard to watch the sepulchre, till the third day was past, pretending to apprehend that his disciples might come by night, and steal away the body, and then give out that he was risen, according to what he himself had predicted while he was yet alive: that they did accordingly set a guard, made sure the sepulchre, and to prevent the soldiers themselves from concurring with the disciples, they put a seal upon the stone which closed up the entrance of the sepulchre.

The order I conceive to have been as follows:—

Very early on the first day of the week, (the day immediately following the Sabbath, and the third from the death of Christ,) Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, in pursuance of the design of embalming the Lord's body, which they had concerted with the other women, who attended him from Galilee to Jerusalem, and for the performing of which they had prepared unguents and spices, set out, in order to take a view of the sepulchre, just as the day began to break: and about the time of their setting out, "there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it: his countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow; and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men," during whose amazement and terror Christ came out of the sepulchre; and the keepers being now recovered out of their trance, and fled, the angel, who till then sat upon the stone, quitted his station on the outside, and entered into the sepulchre, and probably disposed the linen clothes and napkin in that order, in which they were afterwards found and observed by John and Peter. Mary Magdalene, in the mean while, and the other Mary, were still on their way to the sepulchre, where, together with Salome, (whom they had either called upon or met as they were going,) they arrived at the rising of the sun. And as they drew near, discoursing about the method of putting their intent of embalming the body of their Master in execution, "they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? for it was very great;" and they themselves (the two Marys at least) had seen it placed there two days before, and seen with what difficulty it was done. But in the midst of their deliberation about removing this great and sole obstacle to their design, (for it does not appear that they knew any thing of the guard,) lifting up their eyes, while they were yet at some distance, they perceived it was already rolled away. Alarmed at so extraordinary and so unexpected a circumstance, Mary Magdalene, concluding, that, as the stone could not be moved without a great number of hands, so it was not rolled away without some design; and that they who rolled it away could have no other design but to remove the Lord's body; and being convinced by appearances that they had done so, ran immediately to acquaint Peter and John with what she had seen and what she suspected, leaving Mary and Salome there, that if Joanna and the other women should come in the mean time, they might acquaint them with their surprise at finding the stone removed, and the body gone, and of Mary Magdalene's running to inform the two above-mentioned apostles of it. While she was going on this errand, Mary and Salome went on, and entered into the sepulchre, "and there saw an angel sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment, and they were affrighted. And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth which was crucified: He is risen, he is not here: Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you. And they went out quickly and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed; neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid." After the departure of Mary and Salome, came John and Peter, who, having been informed by Mary Magdalene, that the body of the Lord was taken away out of the sepulchre, and that she knew not where they had laid him, "ran both together to the sepulchre; and the other disciple [John] outran Peter, and came first to the sepulchre; and he, stooping down and looking in, saw the linen clothes lying, yet went he not in. Then cometh Simon Peter following him, and went into the sepulchre, and seeth the linen clothes lie, and the napkin that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself. Then went in also that other disciple, which came first to the sepulchre, and he saw and believed;* for as yet they knew not the

* *Believed.*] Commentators have generally agreed to understand by this word no more than that Saint John believed what Mary Magdalene suggested, namely, that they had taken away

Scripture that he must rise again from the dead. Then the disciples went away again unto their own home. But Mary stood without at the sepulchre weeping; and as she wept, she stooped down, and looked into the sepulchre, and seeth two angels in white sitting, the one at the head and the other at the feet, where the body of Jesus had lain; and they say unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? She saith unto them, Because they have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid him. And when she had thus said, she turned herself back, and saw Jesus standing, and knew not that it was Jesus. Jesus saith unto her, Woman, why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou? She, supposing him to be the gardener, saith unto him, Sir, if thou have borne him hence, tell me where thou hast laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus saith unto her, Mary! She turned herself, and saith unto him, Rabboni! which is to say, Master. Jesus saith unto her, Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended unto my Father: but go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God." After this appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene, to whom Saint Mark says expressly he appeared first, the other Mary and Salome, who had fled from the sepulchre in such terror and amazement that they said not any thing to any man, (that is, as I understand, had not told the message of the angel to some* whom they met, and to whom they were directed to deliver it,) were met on their way by Jesus Christ himself, who said to them, "All hail! and they came and held him by the feet and worshipped him. Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid, go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there they shall see me." These several women and the two apostles being now gone from the sepulchre, Joanna, with the other Galilean women, "and others with them, came bringing the spices which they had prepared for the embalming the body of Jesus, and finding the stone rolled away from the sepulchre, they entered in, but not finding the body of the Lord Jesus, they were much perplexed thereabout, and behold two men stood by them in shining garments; and as they were afraid and bowed down their faces to the earth, they said unto them, Why seek ye the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen. Remember how he spake unto you, when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again. And they remembered his words, and returned from the sepulchre, and told all these things unto the eleven, and to all the rest. And their words seemed to them as idle tales, and they believed them not." But Peter, who upon the report of Mary Magdalene had been at the sepulchre, had entered into it, and with a curiosity that bespoke an expectation of something extraordinary, and a desire of being satisfied, had observed that the linen clothes, in which Christ was buried, and the napkin that was about his head, were not only left in the sepulchre, but carefully wrapped up, and laid in several places; and who from thence might begin to suspect, what his companion Saint John from those very circumstances seems to have believed: Peter, I say, hearing from Joanna, that she had seen a vision of angels at the sepulchre, who had assured her that Christ was risen, starting up, ran thither immediately, and knowing that the angels, if they were within the sepulchre, might be discovered without his going in, he did not, as before, enter in, but stooping down looked so far in as to see the "linen clothes, and departed, wondering in himself at that which was come to pass." And either with Peter, or about that time, went some other disciples, who were present when Joanna, and the other women made their report, "and found it even so as the women had said. The same day two of the disciples went to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs. And they talked together of all those things which had happened. And it came to pass that while they communed together and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them. But their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications (arguments) are these that you have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said unto him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said unto them, What things? And they said unto him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a

the Lord's body; and they seem to have been led into this opinion by the words immediately subjoined, "for as yet they knew not the Scripture, that he must rise again from the dead;" which words contain a sort of an excuse for their not believing that he was risen. It is, however, certain, that by the word *believe*, when it is put absolutely, the sacred writers most commonly mean to have, what is called, faith; and in this sense it is used no less than three times in the latter part of this chapter. To obviate this objection, retain the usual signification of this verb, and yet reconcile this verse with the following, it is pretended that Beza's old Greek manuscript says, he did not believe, that is, instead of ἐπίστευσεν, it has οὐκ ἐπίστευσεν or ἠπίστευσεν. Instead of entering into an examination which of these two readings is to be preferred, I shall only observe, that Beza himself, in his comments upon this passage, takes no notice of the various reading above mentioned; on the contrary, he contends that Saint John did believe the resurrection. These are his words,—"Et credidit καὶ ἐπίστευσεν, Christum videlicet resurrexisse, quanquam tenuis adhuc foret hæc fides, et aliis testimoniis egeret, quibus confirmaretur. Joannes igitur solus jam tum hoc credidit," &c. See his Greek Testament in folio, printed at Geneva, A. D. 1598. And I own I am most inclined to his opinion, for reasons which will appear in the course of this work.

* Probably John and Peter, who were running with Mary Magdalene to the sepulchre, about the time that these women were flying from it, might have been discerned by them at a distance, though the terror they were in might occasion their not recollecting them immediately. But of this I shall hereafter say something more.

prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him. But we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel: And besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them which were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said: but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures, the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

This is the order in which the several incidents above related appear to have arisen; the conformity of which with the words of the evangelists, interpreted in their obvious and most natural sense, I have shewn in my remarks upon the passages wherein they are contained: And although the reasons there given are, as I apprehend, sufficient of themselves to justify the exposition I contend for, yet, for the better confirmation of what has been advanced, I beg leave to lay before you an observation or two, suggested by this very order itself, from whence its aptness and tendency to the great end, to which it was in in all its parts directed and disposed by the hand of Providence, namely, the proof of the resurrection of Christ, will manifestly appear.

Sect. X. First then, by this order, in which all the different events naturally and easily follow, and as it were rise out of one another, the narration of the evangelists is cleared from all confusion and inconsistencies. And 2dly, The proof of the resurrection is better established by thus separating the women into two or more divisions, than upon the contrary supposition, which brings them all together to the sepulchre; for in the last case, instead of three different appearances of angels to the women, and two of Jesus Christ, we should have but one of each; whereas in the former there is a train of witnesses, a succession of miraculous events, mutually strengthening and illustrating each other, and equally and jointly concurring to prove one and the same fact; a fact, which, as it was in its own nature most astonishing, and in its consequences of the utmost importance to mankind, required the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence. And I will venture to say, never was a fact more fully proved; as I doubt not to make appear to any one, who with me will consider, 1*st*, the manner; 2*dly*, the matter of the evidence; and 3*dly*, the characters and dispositions of the persons whom it was intended to convince. By these I chiefly mean the apostles, and disciples of Jesus, who were to be the witnesses of the resurrection to all the world. By the manner, I understand the method and order in which the several proofs were laid before them: and by the matter, the several facts of which the evidence consisted.

I shall begin with the apostles and disciples, for whose conviction the miraculous appearances of the angels, and of Christ himself to the women, were principally designed; and the knowledge of whose general characters, as well as of the particular disposition of their minds at that time, will throw a light upon the other points proposed to be considered.

The greatest part, if not all, of the apostles and disciples of Jesus—those, at least, who openly and avowedly followed him—were men of low birth, and mean occupations, illiterate, unaccustomed to deep inquiries and abstracted reasonings; men of gross minds, contracted notions, and strongly possessed with the selfish, carnal, and national prejudices of the Jewish religion, as it was then taught by the scribes and pharisees. And hence, although it is evident from several passages in the gospel history, that, convinced by the many miracles performed by Jesus of Nazareth, and the accomplishments of many prophecies in him, they believed him to be the Messiah, yet their idea of a Messiah was the same with that of their brethren the Jews; who, by not rightly understanding the true meaning of some prophecies, expected to find in the Messiah a temporal prince, a redeemer and ruler of Israel, who should never die. And so deeply was this prejudice rooted in the minds of the apostles, as well

as the rest of the Jews, that although our Saviour constantly disclaimed the character of a temporal prince, and upon many occasions endeavoured to undeceive his disciples, yet they could not wholly give up their opinion, even after they had seen him risen from the dead, and received that incontestable proof of his being the Messiah, and of their having mistaken the sense of the prophecy about his being never to die. For in one of his conferences with them after his resurrection, they ask him, Whether he would at that time restore the kingdom to Israel? (Acts, i. 6.) with so much obstinacy did they adhere to their former prejudices. This, therefore, being their settled notion of the Messiah, can we wonder their former faith in him should be extinguished, when they saw him suffering, crucified, and dying; and instead of saving others, not able to save himself? To prepare them for these events, he had indeed most circumstantially foretold his own sufferings, death, and resurrection: but the apostles themselves assure us that they did not understand those predictions, till some time after their accomplishment; and they made this confession at a time, when they were as sensible of their former dulness, and undoubtedly as much amazed at it, as they now pretend to be, who object it against them; so that their veracity upon this point is not to be questioned. Immortality, therefore, and temporal dominion being, in their opinion, the characteristics of the Messiah, the sufferings and death of Jesus must have convinced them before his resurrection that he was not the Messiah, not that person in whom they had trusted as the redeemer and king of Israel. And having, as they imagined, found themselves mistaken in their faith as to this point, they might, with some colour of reason, be cautious and backward in believing any predictions about his rising again from the dead, had they understood what those predictions meant. The state of mind, therefore, into which the apostles fell on the death of their master, must have been a state of perplexity and confusion,—they could not but reflect upon his miraculous works, and his more miraculous holiness of life, and were not able to account for the ignominious death of so extraordinary a person: A state of dejection and despair,—they had conceived great expectations from the persuasion that he was the Christ of God; but these were all vanished: their promised Deliverer, their expected King, was dead and buried, and no one left to call him from the grave as he did Lazarus. With his life, they might presume, ended his power of working miracles, and death perhaps was an enemy he could not subdue, since it was apparent he could not escape it; and hence proceeded their despair. It was likewise a state of anxiety and terror,—the Jews had just put their master to death as a malefactor and impostor; what then could his followers expect from his inveterate and triumphant enemies, but insults, and reproaches, and ignominy, scourges, chains, and death? The fear of the Jews made them desert their master when he was first seized; made Peter, the most zealous of the apostles, deny him thrice, even with oaths and imprecations; and made the apostles and disciples, when they met together on the day of the resurrection, to confer upon the accounts they had received of Christ's being risen, retire into a chamber, and shut the door, lest they should be discovered by the Jews. Such, then, was the state of the apostles' minds upon the death of their master, full of prejudice, doubt, perplexity, despair, and terror: distemperatures that required a gentle treatment, lenient medicines, and a gradual cure. Which leads me to consider, in the next place, the manner, that is, the method and order, of that evidence by which they were recovered into a state of sanity; and from deserters of their master converted into believers, teachers, and martyrs of the gospel.

Sect. XI.—The first alarm they received was from Mary Magdalene, who, early in the morning, on the third day from the burial of our Saviour, came running to inform Peter and John, that she had found the stone rolled from the mouth of the sepulchre, and that the body of the Lord was taken away. This information carried those two apostles thither, who entered into the sepulchre, and found the linen clothes in which his body had been wrapped, and the napkin that was bound about his head, folded up, and lying in different parts of the sepulchre. These circumstances, trifling as they may seem at first sight, were, if duly considered, very awakening, and very proper to prepare their minds for something extraordinary; since nothing but the resurrection of Jesus could, in right reason, be concluded from them. The body, they saw, was gone; but by whom could it be taken away, and for what purpose? Not by friends; for then, in all probability, they would have known something about it: Not by the Jews, for they had nothing to do with it; Pilate, to whom alone the disposal of it belonged, as the body of a malefactor executed by his orders, had given it to his disciples, who had laid it in that sepulchre but two days before; and wherefore should they remove it again so soon? Not to bury it; for in that case they would not have left the spices, the winding-sheet, and the napkin behind them. Whoever, therefore, had removed the body, they could not have done it with a design to bury it; and yet no other purpose for the removal of it could well be

imagined. Besides, it must have been removed in the night by stealth, and, consequently, in a hurry: how then came the winding-sheet and the napkin to be folded up, and disposed in so orderly a manner within the sepulchre? Add to all this, that the stone was very large, and therefore many people must have been concerned in this transaction, not one of whom was there to give an answer to any questions. These, or such like reflections, could not but rise in their minds, and these difficulties could not but dispose them to expect some extraordinary event. His life, they knew, was a life of miracles, and his death was attended with prodigies and wonders; all which could not but come crowding into their memories; and yet none of them at that time (excepting John) believed that he was risen from the dead; "for as yet," as that apostle assures us, "they knew not the scripture, that he must rise again from the dead:" that is, they did not understand from the prophets that the Messiah was to rise again from the dead, being, on the contrary, persuaded, that these very prophets had foretold the Messiah should not die, but "abide for ever."

The next information they received was from Joanna,* and the women who accompanied her to the sepulchre, who acquainted them with two new and very surprising particulars, namely, that they had there seen a vision of angels, and that those angels had told them that Jesus was risen, and had moreover reminded them of what himself had formerly spoken to his disciples concerning his sufferings, his death, and his resurrection on the third day, being foretold by the prophets. What various reflections must these two amazing circumstances immediately suggest to them! The great difficulty about the body of their master being missing, which had so much alarmed and puzzled them, was at once solved. Angels told the women he was risen from the dead; and to induce them the more easily to believe so astonishing an event, bade them remember that Christ himself had, not only from the spirit of prophecy, with which they knew he was endowed, but from the prophets also, predicted his own sufferings, and death, and rising again from the dead on the third day. The words of their master they well remembered, and were so far convinced that the women spoke truth. Those parts also of this prediction, which related to his sufferings and death, they had seen most exactly accomplished; and that was a powerful argument for their believing that the rest might be so too: besides, this was the third day, the very day on which Jesus had told them he should rise from the dead. The argument, therefore, drawn from the testimony of the prophets, upon which their disbelief of the resurrection was principally founded, was here attacked; and the interpretation of their master, verified in most of the particulars by the event, was here set up in opposition to that of the scribes and pharisees, whose leaven they had so frequently been cautioned against. But then they did not understand what was meant by his rising from the dead. Was he once more to live with them upon earth? If so, where was he? Nobody had as yet seen him, neither the women, nor those among them, who, upon their report, had gone to the sepulchre. By his rising from the dead, therefore, might be meant, that God had taken him into heaven as he did Enoch and Elijah; and could they hope he would return from thence to be the redeemer and king of Israel? To obviate these several difficulties, and proceed one step farther towards explaining to them the meaning of the resurrection, they were probably acquainted in the next place by Mary Magdalene, that she had seen, not

* I have placed this report of Joanna next to the relation above cited made by Mary Magdalene, and before the second report made by her, and that of the other two Marys; because, by what the two disciples, who were going to Emmaus, say to Jesus, it is evident that they had heard the report of Joanna, and had not, when they left the rest of the disciples, heard either of the last mentioned reports. Farther, by their using the first person plural in speaking of those to whom this report was made, as some women of *our* company made *us* astonished, compared with what Saint Luke says at the 9th verse, of the women returning and telling all those things to the eleven and all the rest, it looks as if they were of the number of those who were present when this report was made; and that Saint Peter was of that number is evident, and so, I think, were all the eleven, and many other of those called disciples, assembled together probably by John and Peter, as was before observed. These several points being admitted, it will follow, that the report of Joanna and those with her, was made to the eleven and all the rest, previously to the second report of Mary Magdalene, and that of the other two Marys, though the events, which gave occasion to the two latter, were in order of time prior to that related by Joanna; for if any of those, who were present when Joanna related what had happened to her at the sepulchre, had heard that Christ had appeared to Mary Magdalene and the two other Marys, they would doubtless have mentioned it upon that occasion, in which case it must have been heard, and would as certainly have been mentioned by the two disciples, in their conversation with Jesus on the way to Emmaus; and even supposing they were not present when Joanna made her report, but received it only from some who were, it is probable that they that told them the particulars relating to Joanna, and Peter's second visit to the sepulchre, would at the same time have informed them of the accounts given by Mary Magdalene and the other Marys, had they at that time heard any thing of them. There may, indeed, be some difficulty in accounting for this, especially as the appearance of Christ to Mary Magdalene was very early; and it is said, John, xx. 18, that she went and told it to the disciples; and still more expressly by Saint Mark, xvi. 20; and if her zeal and haste in carrying the news of the stone's being removed, and the warmth of her own temper, and the express command of Christ to her to acquaint his disciples, be considered, it will appear very probable that she went on this errand immediately; and it is very natural to think that she went directly to Peter this second time, as she did the first; and that apostle, when he left her at the sepulchre, went directly home, as did also John, (xx. 10.) But if he and Peter were gone to acquaint the other disciples with the Lord's body being missing, as is above supposed, her not finding them immediately is easily accounted for; besides which, many other things might happen unknown to us to bring Joanna, and those with her, to Peter and the other disciples, before they saw Mary Magdalene after her second visit to the sepulchre, and before the other two Marys came with their message, who, notwithstanding their nearness to the city when Christ appeared to them, and the early date of that appearance, might possibly not be enough recovered from their fright to deliver their message immediately; or, if they were, they might, for the reason above given, miss that apostle (Peter) to whom they were particularly commanded to deliver it, and to whom, therefore, in all probability, they went directly. All these things, however, are mere conjectures, and as such I submit them to the judgment of the reader.

angels only, but Christ himself, who had appeared to her as she stood weeping at the sepulchre; that at first, indeed, she did not know him, taking him for the gardener; that upon his calling her by her name she knew him; that having offered to embrace him, he forbade her, giving her for a reason that he was "not yet ascended to his Father;" but bidding her go, and tell his disciples, that in a short time he should "ascend to his Father and their Father, his God and their God." In this relation of Mary Magdalene's were three articles of great importance. 1*st*, A stronger proof, than any they had hitherto received, of Christ's being risen from the dead: Mary Magdalene had seen him. 2*dly*, He told her he was "not yet ascended to his Father," by which there seemed to be some hopes given them, that they also might have the satisfaction of seeing him. 3*dly*, The words, "I ascend to my Father," &c. plainly referred to a conversation he had with them before he was betrayed, in which he told them that he should "go to his Father," &c. By these words, therefore, they were not only reminded of another prediction of his, but called upon to expect the great things which were to be the consequence of his "going to the Father," namely, the "coming of the Comforter," a power of working miracles; and what would be an earnest of all these things, the joy of seeing him again; all which he had promised them in the conversation alluded to in this message, John, xiii. 14. Yet some doubts and difficulties still remained. Nobody but Mary Magdalene had seen him; and she did not know him at first, but took him for the gardener. Perhaps the whole was illusion; but allowing it was Christ whom she saw, why was she commanded not to touch him? It was probably an apparition, and not Christ himself. Besides, wherefore did he not appear to his disciples, who, according to his own promise, were to see him again? The whole story, therefore, might still appear to them an idle visionary tale.

To deliver them from these perplexities nothing could be better calculated, than the account given by the other Mary and Salome, which imported that they also had been at the sepulchre, where they had seen an angel, who not only assured them that Christ was risen, but ordered them to tell his disciples that they should meet him in Galilee, agreeably to what he himself had said to them in his lifetime: That they were so amazed and terrified at this vision, that they fled from the sepulchre with the utmost precipitation, intending to communicate these things to the apostles, as the angel had commanded them, but were so overcome with fear, that they had not the power to tell what they had seen and heard to some whom they saw in the way: That as they were going, Jesus Christ himself met them, and saluting them with an "All hail! bade them not be afraid, but go and tell his brethren that they should go into Galilee, and that they should see him there;" to which they added, that "they went, and held him by the feet, and worshipped him:" And farther, they informed Peter, that the angel had expressly enjoined them to deliver this message to him in particular. Had the apostles and disciples given credit to this account of Mary and Salome, they could have had but one scruple left. Jesus had now appeared to two women besides Mary Magdalene; had permitted those women to embrace his feet, and given thereby a sensible proof that it was himself, and not an apparition, and had also appointed a place, where they themselves were to see him. The only scruple therefore, that now remained, arose from their not having seen him themselves; and till they did, they seemed resolved to suspend their belief of his being risen from the dead, and treated all these several visions of the women as so many idle tales.

It is observable that all these miraculous incidents followed close upon the back of one another, and consequently were crowded into a small compass of time; so that we ought to be the less surprised at the apostles not yielding at once to so much evidence. Such a heap of wonders were enough to amaze and overwhelm their understandings. They were therefore left for a time to ruminate upon what they had heard; to compare the several reports together; to examine the Scriptures; and recollect the predictions and discourses of their master, to which they were referred both by the angels and himself. But the examination of the Scriptures was a work of some time; and in the situation in which they then were, their minds undoubtedly were in too great an agitation to settle to such an employment, with the composure and attention that was necessary. Besides, it must be remembered, they were a company of illiterate men, not versed in the interpretations of prophecies, nor accustomed to long arguments and deductions; and were moreover under the dominion of an inveterate prejudice, authorized by the scribes and pharisees, the priests and elders, whose learning and whose doctrines they had been instructed early to revere. To assist them in their inquiries, and lead them to the true sense of the Scriptures, the only rational means of conquering their prejudices, Christ himself appeared that same day to two of his disciples, who were going to Emmaus, a village about threescore furlongs distant from Jerusalem, and whom he found discoursing and reasoning, as they went, upon those very topics. These disciples, as I have already shewed, had left Jerusalem, before any of the women, who had seen Christ, had made their report; at least that report had

not come to their knowledge. All they had heard was, that some women, who had been early at the sepulchre, had there been informed by angels, that he was risen from the dead, and put in mind that he himself had formerly predicted his resurrection, by shewing out of the prophets that so it was to be. This argument were they debating, when our Saviour joined them; who, questioning them upon the subject of their debate, and the affliction visible in their countenances; and understanding from the account they gave, that they were still unsatisfied as to the main point, and seemed to put the proof of his being risen from the dead, upon his shewing himself alive, rebuked them first for their "ignorance and backwardness in believing all that the prophets had spoken; and then beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself." During this whole conversation they knew him not; their eyes were holden, as Saint Luke informs us, and for what reason is very plain. The design of Christ in entering into so particular an exposition of the prophets was to shew, that by making a proper use of their understanding, they might, from those very Scriptures, whose authority they allowed, have been convinced that the Messiah ought to have suffered, as they had seen him suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day. That is, Christ chose rather to convince them by reason, than by sense; or at least so to prepare their minds, that their assenting afterwards to the testimony of their senses should be with the concurrence of their reason. He had proceeded in the same manner with the other disciples at Jerusalem, from all of whom he had hitherto withholden the evidence of sense, having not appeared to any of them, excepting Peter, till after the return of these two disciples to Jerusalem. This proceeding, at once so becoming the Lord of righteousness and truth, and the freedom of man as a reasonable being, must have been prevented, had Christ discovered himself to them at his first appearing. Wonder and astonishment in that case had taken place of reason, and left them, perhaps, when the first strong impression was a little worn away, in doubt and scepticism. But now, having duly prepared them to receive the testimony of their senses, he discovered himself to them, and that by an act of devotion, "in breaking of bread," which among the Jews was always attended with thanksgiving to God, the giver of our daily bread. But there seems to have been something peculiar in this action, upon which account it was mentioned by Saint Luke in his narration of this history, and by the two disciples themselves, when they related to the apostles at Jerusalem, what had happened to them at Emmaus. The manner undoubtedly of breaking the bread, and probably the form of words in the thanksgiving, were particular to our Saviour; and these latter perhaps were the very same with those made use of by him at the last supper. At least, these two actions are described by Saint Luke in the same words, namely, "He took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave to them." If so, how strongly were they called upon by this action to remember their Lord, who had instituted that very form in remembrance of his death! and how properly did it accompany that discovery of himself which he now thought fit to make to them! Accordingly they were convinced, and returned that same hour to Jerusalem, where they found the apostles assembled together, and debating, apparently upon the several reports they had heard that day, and particularly upon what Peter had told them, to whom some time that day Christ had appeared. But as neither the time, nor the particulars of that appearance are recorded by the evangelists, I shall not pretend to say any thing more about it, than that the apostles seem to have laid a greater stress upon that alone, than upon all those related by the women. For upon these two disciples coming into the chamber, they accost them immediately, without waiting to hear their story, with "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," but make no mention of any of his appearances to the women. After which, the two disciples related what had happened to them in the way to Emmaus, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread. But Saint Mark says, (xvi. 13,) they did not believe these two disciples any more than they had done the others, to whom Christ had appeared; which words seem to contain a sort of a contradiction to what they themselves seem to acknowledge in saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon." Let us therefore examine these two passages with a little more attention. The whole passage in Saint Mark is this: "After that, he appeared in another form to two of them, as they walked, and went into the country, and they went and told it unto the residue, neither believed they them." To which I must add the following: (xvi. 14,) "Afterward he appeared unto the eleven, as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them, which had seen him after he was risen." By comparing these passages in Saint Mark with the parallel passages in Saint Luke, it will appear what the belief of the apostles was, and what their unbelief. The parallel to the first has been already considered. The course of my narration leads me now to consider that to the second; and in the doing of this, I shall take occasion to observe how they illustrate and explain each other, and thereby vindicate

these two evangelists from the suspicion of contradicting one another's account.

The apostles, by the several relations of the women, which they received early in the morning, and upon which they had had sufficient time to comment and reflect, (for it was now night,) and afterwards by those of Peter and the two disciples from Emmaus, being ripe for conviction, Christ vouchsafed to give them that evidence they seemed so much to desire, and which having been granted to others, they had some reason to hope for and expect. Accordingly, as the disciples from Emmaus had just finished their story, "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you; and they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed they had seen a spirit." Here then was their error, and in this consisted their unbelief. They acknowledged indeed that Christ was risen from the dead, but did not believe that he had bodily appeared to those, who pretended to have seen him, and to have had sufficient evidence upon that point. These, Saint Mark says, they did not believe; and we learn from Saint Luke, that when he appeared to them, they did not believe even their own eyes, but supposed they had seen a spirit. That this was the unbelief for which, as we read in Saint Mark, our Saviour rebuked them, is evident from what follows after in Saint Luke. "And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? And why do thoughts [reasonings, διαλογισμοι] arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet." We may judge of the distemper by the remedy. He bade them feel and see that it was no spirit, but he himself. Why? because they doubted of it: and he upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they doubted of it, notwithstanding the testimony of people, whose veracity they had no reason to suspect, and who brought credentials with them, that could not be forged. It being evident from these passages, thus compared together, that the unbelief of the apostles, mentioned by Saint Mark, and the belief which they professed, according to Saint Luke, were both partial, those two evangelists are thus perfectly reconciled.

But if any one should still insist that these words of the apostles and disciples, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," imply that they then had a full and explicit belief of the resurrection of Christ, as from the force of the word *indeed*, I am myself inclined to think, and should demand how they came afterwards to disbelieve the two disciples, and to suspect even that appearance which themselves saw? I answer, that in the appearance of Christ to the two disciples, and in that afterwards to themselves, were some circumstances, which at first, and till more satisfactory proofs were given, might naturally tend to confound and unsettle the faith which they had taken up upon the evidence of Peter: because Christ appearing first to the two disciples in another form, and vanishing out of their sight as soon as he was made known to them, seemed better to suit with the idea of his being a spirit, than a living body; and his entering into the room where they were assembled, the doors being shut, rather confirmed that idea, in the first sudden impression it made upon their minds; which mistake, in both cases, arose from their not attending sufficiently to the miraculous powers belonging to Christ; to the operations of which his being in the body was no impediment. This inadvertency, and want of due consideration in the apostles and disciples, justifies our Saviour's rebuking them for not believing them which had seen him.

But the doubts occasioned by it were soon overcome by those farther proofs of the reality of his body, which he afterwards vouchsafed to give them: and by this explanation, as well as by the former, the evangelists are cleared from contradicting each other.

However, neither did these proofs entirely satisfy them; for as the history goes on, "While they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, Christ said unto them, Have ye any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and an honeycomb, and he took it and did eat before them." So much compassion did he shew for their infirmity! and so much care did he take, that not even a shadow of a scruple should remain in their minds, upon a point of the utmost importance to the great business he came about! And perceiving now that every doubt was vanished, and they were perfectly convinced, he said to them, (pursuing the argument begun by the angels, and carried on by himself with the two disciples in the way of Emmaus,) "These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the Law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me. Then opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures, and said unto them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ (that is, the Messiah) to suffer, and to rise from the dead on the third day; and that repentance, and remission of sins should be preached in his name, beginning at Jerusalem; and ye are witnesses of these things."

The apostles having now had every kind of evidence laid before them, that was requisite to convince them of the reality of the resurrection of Christ; and being moreover enabled by the gift of that Holy Spirit, which inspired the prophets, to understand the true meaning of those sacred oracles, to which their master

constantly referred them for the marks and characters of the Messiah, which he affirmed to be found in him, as well in his sufferings, and death, and rising again from the dead on the third day, as in the miraculous actions and unspotted holiness of his life, were again left to consider and examine at leisure the several proofs of the resurrection, which they had heard and seen that day; and particularly those arising from the accomplishment of the predictions contained in the Holy Scriptures. That they might apply themselves to this examination with that cool, deliberate, and sober attention, that is more especially necessary to the rooting out inveterate and religious prejudices, and planting in their stead a rational and well-grounded faith, such as is required of all those who believe in Christ, and was particularly necessary for them who were to be witnesses of all these things to all the world, he forebore visiting them any more for eight days; after which he condescended to submit himself to a farther examination, in order to remove the unreasonable scruples of Saint Thomas, one of the apostles; who, having not been present when our Saviour appeared to the other disciples, and consequently not having seen him himself, refused to believe upon the report of others, so wonderful a thing as Christ's rising from the dead: nay, he was resolved not to be convinced with seeing only, "Except I shall see in his hands," says he, "the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe." Jesus, when he appeared to his disciples, shewed them his hands and his feet, as a proof of his being the same Jesus that was crucified. This circumstance, among the rest, the apostles undoubtedly related to Saint Thomas, as an evidence by which they were assured that it was their master whom they had seen; and upon this evidence Saint Thomas also was contented to believe: But first he would be convinced that it was real, he would not only see the print of the nails, which might be counterfeited, he would "put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hand into his side. Eight days after, therefore, when his disciples were again met together in a chamber, and Thomas was with them, Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands, and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing." What could Saint Thomas do, but yield immediately to the evidence he had required? And what could he say to one, who appeared to know all his thoughts, but, "My Lord, and my God!" Jesus saith unto him, "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

After this, there seems to have been no scruple left in the minds of any one of the apostles, to whom, however, Christ was still pleased to continue his visits, being seen of them, as Saint Luke testifies, (Acts, i. 3,) "forty days after his passion, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." But as hitherto all the appearances of Christ seem to have been intended only for the conviction of his apostles, and those that follow rather for their confirmation and instruction in the faith and doctrines of the gospel, the sacred writers, who have been very particular in the accounts they give us of the former, have mentioned but very few of the latter: I say few; for I think it highly probable that the appearances of Christ to his apostles for the remaining thirty days, were more than they have thought proper to record. And the reason of this different proceeding is very obvious. The apostles are to be considered both as witnesses of the miracles, and the sufferings, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and teachers and preachers of his doctrine. In the character of witnesses, a circumstantial account of the means and opportunities they had of knowing certainly the several facts attested by them, must needs give great force and credit to their evidence; whereas, in that of preachers, it is sufficient that their auditors were satisfied in general that the doctrines taught by them were derived from the instructions, and authorized by the commission given them by their master "to teach all nations;" and of this, the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, poured out not upon the apostles only, but by them upon all believers, were full and unquestionable proofs. But among the last mentioned appearances of Christ, there are two, which, by reason of their connection with the former, ought by no means to have been omitted: the first relates to Christ's meeting his disciples in Galilee, which was foretold by Christ himself before his death, repeated by the angels to the women at the sepulchre, and afterwards confirmed to them again by Christ. The accomplishment of this prophecy it was certainly necessary to shew: accordingly, we have it in Saint Matthew, who says, "Then the eleven disciples went into Galilee, unto a mountain, where Jesus had appointed them, and when they saw him they worshipped him: but others doubted." The second, in like manner corresponds with what was spoken by our Saviour to Mary Magdalene in these words:— "But go to my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;" which words, as I have already observed, referred to a conversation he had with his disciples the night before he was betrayed, wherein he told them, 1*st*, That he should go to his Father; 2*dly*, That

he would come to them before he went to his Father; *3dly*, That after he was gone to the Father, he would send them a Comforter, even the Spirit of Truth, who would "teach them all things, and bring all things to their remembrance, whatsoever he had said unto them;" and *4thly*, That whosoever believed on him should have the power of working as great, nay, greater miracles than he did. The fulfilling of which several promises or prophecies I shall now set down, only premising, that the second article was abundantly accomplished by the several appearances above mentioned, as we have already seen. The first, namely, his ascension into heaven, came to pass in this manner:—(Acts, i. 4—14.) "And being assembled together with them, he commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. For John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence. When they therefore were come together, they asked of him, saying, Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel? And he said unto them, It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power; but ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you; and ye shall be witnesses unto me, both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. And when he had spoken these things, while they beheld, he was taken up, and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly towards heaven, as he went up, behold two men stood by them in white apparel, which said unto them, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven." The history of the accomplishment of the third article is in the next chapter, and in these words:—"And when the day of Pentecost was fully come, they were all with one accord in one place; and suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting: and there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling at Jerusalem, Jews, devout men, out of every nation under heaven. Now when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together and were confounded, because that every man heard them speak in their own language. And they were all amazed and marvelled, saying one to another, Behold, are not all these which speak, Galilæans? and how hear we every man in our own tongue, wherein we were born! Parthians, and Medes, and Elamites, and the dwellers in Mesopotamia, and in Judea, and Cappadocia, in Pontus, and Asia, Phrygia, and Pamphylia, in Egypt, and in the parts of Libya, about Cyrene, and strangers of Rome, Jews and proselytes, Cretes and Arabians, we do hear them speak in our tongues the wonderful works of God." For a proof of the completion of the fourth article, I shall refer the reader to the history of the Acts of the Apostles, in which he will find numberless instances of the power of working miracles in the apostles; "by whose hands," says the historian, (v. 12,) "were many signs and wonders wrought among the people, insomuch that they brought forth the sick into the streets, and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might overshadow some of them. There came also a multitude out of the cities round about Jerusalem, bringing sick folks, and them which were vexed with unclean spirits, and they were healed every one."

From this view of the method and order in which the several proofs of the resurrection were laid before the apostles, it is manifest that, as Christ required of them a reasonable and well-grounded faith, so did he pursue the most proper and effectual means for the attaining that end. With this purpose, instead of bearing down their reason, and dazzling their understanding by a full manifestation of himself all at once, we see him letting in the light upon them by little and little, and preparing their minds by the gradual dawning of truth, that they might be able to bear the full lustre of the Sun of Righteousness rising from the grave; to consider, and examine, and know, that it was he himself, and to assure the world it was impossible they could be deceived. And as, by this proceeding in general, he intended to open their understandings by degrees, and conduct them step by step to a full conviction and knowledge of the truth, so, by referring them to the Scriptures, and submitting himself to the scrutiny and judgment of their senses, he did not only wave all authority, but require them in a strong and particular manner to exercise their reason in examining the evidence brought before them; for which purpose, also, he both improved their faculties by the infusion of his Holy Spirit, and gave them sufficient time, and frequent opportunities, "shewing himself to them alive after his passion, by many infallible proofs," says the author of the Acts, "being seen of them forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." And most certainly never was evidence more fairly offered to consideration; never was there inquiry put into a more rational method, as indeed there

never were any facts that could better abide the test. This I shall now endeavour to evince, by considering the facts themselves, upon which the proof of the resurrection, and consequently the faith of the apostles, was established.

Sect. XII.—The facts of which the evidence of the resurrection consisted, may be comprised under three heads:—1*st*, The appearances of the angels; 2*dly*, The appearances of Christ to the women; and, 3*dly*, The appearances of Christ to the disciples and apostles.

1*st*, The appearances of the angels at the sepulchre on the morning of the resurrection were many, each differing from the other, and seen by different persons; as, 1*st*, By the Roman soldiers who kept the sepulchre; 2*dly*, By the other Mary and Salome; 3*dly*, By Mary Magdalene; 4*thly*, By Joanna, and those with her.

The angel who appeared to the Roman soldiers was clothed with terror, "his face was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." His coming was attended with an earthquake, and his strength so much beyond that of mortals, that he singly rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre; which, according to Beza's copies, both Greek and Latin, was so large that twenty men could hardly roll it. I have already taken notice of the two purposes, upon which this angel of the Lord descended from heaven, namely, to fright away the soldiers, and to open the sepulchre, that the women, who were then on their way thither, and the others, both women and disciples and Jews, who were to come thither that day, might have free entrance into it, and see that the body of Jesus was not there. The reasonableness of these two purposes, I think, every body must acknowledge; and that is a very material point towards establishing the credibility of the fact; especially if we consider that, without the interposition of Heaven, the sepulchre would probably not have been opened, nor the guard removed, till after the expiration of the third day, the day prefixed by Christ for his rising from the dead; in which case, though no earthly power could have hindered Christ, who is the power of God, from coming out of the grave, yet the door of the sepulchre remaining closed, and the guard continuing there, must effectually have prevented that examination into the state of the sepulchre, which convinced Saint John that Christ was risen; and which, if it did not of itself amount to a clear proof of the resurrection, was at least admirably calculated to prepare the minds, not of the apostles only, but of all the Jews who were at that time in Jerusalem, to admit such other proofs, as were afterwards offered to their consideration. For it is not to be imagined, that none but the disciples of Jesus visited the sepulchre that day. The story told by the soldiers undoubtedly soon spread all over Jerusalem; and bare curiosity, without any other motive, was surely sufficient to carry numbers to survey the scene of so astonishing an event: A sepulchre, hewed out of a rock, closed with a vast stone, and that stone but the evening before sealed up by the high priests and elders, and committed to a guard of Roman soldiers; this sepulchre, notwithstanding all these precautions, opened, as one part of the soldiers reported, by an angel from heaven, or as others said, by the disciples of Jesus; who, as was pretended, came by night, and while the guard slept, stole away the body of Jesus, which in effect was missing. These two different and irreconcileable reports must have likewise induced others to go, and consider upon the spot, by examining into the nature and situation of the sepulchre, the probability of that report, which charged the disciples with having stolen away the body of Jesus; for as, upon that supposition, none but human means are said to have been employed, in order to know whether those means were proportioned to the effects ascribed to them, it was necessary to compare what was done, with the manner in which it was pretended to be performed. And upon such an examination, I think, it must have appeared to every considerate man, if not impossible, at least improbable in the highest degree, for the disciples of Jesus to have stolen away his body, while the guards were at their posts. For supposing the disciples to be the reverse of what they were, bold, enterprising, cunning impostors, and capable of making so hazardous an attempt; can it also be supposed, that a company of Roman soldiers, trained up under the strictest discipline, and placed there but the evening before, should be all asleep at the same time, and sleep so soundly and so long, as not to be awakened, either by rolling away the stone, (which, as it singly closed up the mouth of the sepulchre, must certainly have been very large) or by the carrying off the body; the former of which required a great number of hands, and the latter must have appeared to have been done with some deliberation, since the linen clothes in which the body was wrapped, and the napkin, that was wound about the head, were folded up and laid in different parts of the sepulchre. The sepulchre was hewed or hollowed into the solid rock; so that they could have no thought of making a secret passage into it, by digging through the rock; and consequently must have gone in by that only entrance, which was closed up by a great stone, and guarded by a band of Roman soldiers. These several circumstances, duly attended to, were of themselves sufficient to invalidate the testimony of those soldiers, who pretended that the disciples

stole away their master's body while they were asleep. But they were, on the other hand, very strong arguments for the credibility of that account, in which all the soldiers at first agreed, and which part of them undoubtedly had published, before the other story was put into their mouths by the chief priests and elders. For in this relation a cause is assigned proportionable to all the effects,—effects which, as they were visible and notorious, as well as extraordinary, could not fail of exciting the natural curiosity of mankind to inquire by what means they were brought about. The solution is easy and full, "An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, rolled away the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre, and sat upon it: His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." This accounts for the terror of the soldiers, their deserting their post, their precipitate flight into the city; for the stone's being rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, even while it was surrounded by a Roman guard; for the sepulchral linen being left in the grave, folded up, and lying in different places; and for the body's being missing; and therefore the cause here assigned, however wonderful, is most likely to be true.

Nor could the miracle be any objection to the credibility of this account among the Jews, who, upon the authority of their lawgiver, their prophets, and their historians, were accustomed to think the working miracles very consistent with the idea of God, the Almighty and All-wise Creator of heaven and earth; though some modern philosophers have pretended to discover from reason, that miracles are to the common sense and understanding of man utterly impossible, and contrary to the unchangeableness of God. This point, indeed, if it could be made out, (as most certainly it cannot,) would of itself be a sufficient answer to all the arguments that can be brought in support of the credibility, not of this story only, but of all the evangelical history, and the Jewish religion also; and would supersede all other objections to them, as needless and superfluous. Let those, then, who upon the force of this speculation deny Christianity, here try their strength: let them prove that miracles are utterly impossible, &c. or, till they do, let them give leave to those, who are of a contrary opinion, to insist that in the present case the miracle can be no objection to the credibility of the fact; and that, as I have said, it could have been none among the Jews in particular, who from their infancy had heard, and read, and believed the mighty signs and wonders wrought by God for his people Israel; had expected to find in the Messiah a power of working miracles; and had evidence of many performed among them by Jesus and his disciples. And indeed the appearance of an angel upon this occasion, so far from being an objection, was highly proper, I had almost said necessary. Jesus had, but two days before, been put to death by the rulers of the Jews, as an impostor; one who, by the authority of Beelzebub, cast out devils, and by assuming the character of the Messiah, blasphemed God. His sepulchre also was guarded by a band of soldiers, under the pretence of preventing his disciples from carrying on the imposture begun by their master, by stealing away his body, and giving out that he was risen from the dead, in consequence of what he had said before his crucifixion. Under these circumstances, the attestation of Heaven was necessary to shew that God, though he had suffered him to expire on the cross, had not forsaken him; but on the contrary had co-operated with him even in his sufferings, his death, and burial, and resurrection from the dead on the third day; having, by the secret workings of his providence and his almighty power, accomplished in every point the several predictions of Jesus relating to each of those events,—events which, at the time of those predictions, none but God, or an eye enlightened by his omniscient Spirit, could foresee; and which nothing less than his all-controlling power could bring about. The descent, therefore, of the angel of the Lord from heaven, and his rolling away the stone from the sepulchre, was a visible proof that the finger of God was in the great work of the resurrection; was a proper honour done to him who claimed to be the Son of God, and unanswerably refuted the impious calumnies of those who, upon account of that claim, styled him an impostor and blasphemer.

Sect. XIII.—What has been just said of the propriety and necessity of an angel's descending from heaven upon the present occasion, is applicable in general to the several appearances of angels seen by the women, which I shall examine in the next place, taking it for granted, that the miraculousness of such appearances will be no longer urged as an argument against their possibility. The only thing, then, remaining to be considered in this examination is the internal evidence which these several visions carry along with them of reality and truth; for by some they have been treated as pure illusions, and by others as downright falsehoods. The principal argument made use of to prove their falsehood is founded upon a supposed contradiction and inconsistency in the several accounts given of them by the evangelists; which argument having been thoroughly discussed in the foregoing part of this discourse, I must refer the reader thither for an answer to it. That these appearances were illusions, the effects of superstition, ignorance, and fear, hath been insinuated rather than asserted; but hath never, that I know of, been attempted to be proved.

I shall not therefore amuse myself with a vain search after arguments, which, I presume, are not easy to be found, or they would have been produced by those who have laboured with so much diligence to expose and ridicule the faith of Christians; but leaving such to make good their assertion who shall think fit to maintain it, I shall proceed to lay down a few observations tending to prove the reality and truth of these appearances of the angels to the women.

The angel first seen by the women was that described by Saint Mark, in the form of a "young man sitting [within the sepulchre] on the right side, clothed in a long white garment," at the sight of whom the women [Mary and Salome] discovering great signs of fear, he saith unto them, "Be not affrighted; ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, which was crucified; he is risen, he is not here. Behold the place where they laid him. But go your way, tell his disciples and Peter, that he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him, as he said unto you." That this was a real vision, and no phantom of the imagination, is evident from these particulars. 1*st*, As it does not appear from this or any other account, that the women, upon their coming to the sepulchre, were under any such terrors or perturbation of mind, as are apt to fill the fancy with spectres and apparitions. On the contrary, they went thither a little after day-break, prepared and expecting to find the dead body of Jesus there, and purposing to embalm it; about the doing of which they had been calmly conferring by the way. So, 2*dly*, By their coming with a design to embalm the body, it is plain they had no notion either of his being already risen, or that he would rise from the dead; and therefore, 3*dly*, Had the angel been only the creature of a disturbed imagination, they would scarcely have put into his mouth a speech that directly contradicted all the ideas upon which they proceeded but one moment before. 4*thly*, It is to be observed farther, that the illusion must have been double; two senses must have been deceived, the hearing and the sight; for the angel was heard as well as seen; and though this frequently happens in dreams, and sometimes perhaps in a delirium, or a fit of madness, yet I question whether an instance exactly parallel, in all its parts, to the case here supposed, was ever known; for no two people dream together exactly alike, nor are affected in a delirium with exactly the same imaginations. 5*thly*, The words spoken by the angel refer to others spoken by Christ to his disciples before his passion, in which he told them, that after "he was risen, he would go before them to Galilee." This promise or prediction the angel here reminds them of, bids them tell the disciples from him to go into Galilee, and promises them that Christ will meet them there. Now, as not only the resurrection, but the personal appearance of Christ also, is implied in these words, the reason given above, under the third particular, concludes, in the present case, more strongly against supposing them to have proceeded only from the imagination of the women; for the sudden change of whose opinion from a disbelief of the resurrection, into a full and explicit belief of it, no adequate cause can be assigned. For if it should be allowed that they knew of this prediction of Christ's, (which, however, does not appear,) yet the business that brought them to the sepulchre makes it evident, that till that instant they did either not recollect, not understand, or not believe it. And if it be farther said, that upon their entering into the sepulchre, and not finding the body of Jesus, this prediction might naturally come at once into their heads, and they might as suddenly, and as reasonably believe Christ to be risen, as Saint John did, whose faith was built upon no other evidence than what these women had now before them; I answer, that allowing Saint John, when he is said to have first believed the resurrection, had no other evidence than these women now had, or might have had, yet it is to be observed, that Saint John was in a fitter disposition of mind to reflect and judge upon that evidence, than the women. Saint John ran to the sepulchre upon the information given him by Mary Magdalene, that the body of Jesus was removed from thence, and laid she knew not where, nor by whom; and, as the sepulchre was at some distance from his habitation, many thoughts must naturally have arisen in his mind, tending to account for the removal of the body; and among the rest, perhaps, some confused and obscure hope that he might be risen from the dead, pursuant to many predictions to that purpose delivered by him to his disciples. But whatever his thoughts were at the time of his coming to the sepulchre, about which it must be owned nothing can be offered but mere conjecture, it is certain he had leisure to reflect upon the predictions of his master, and to examine into the state of the sepulchre, which both he and Peter did, (and that implies some deliberation and presence of mind,) and that after this deliberate examination he departed quietly to his own home. Whereas, the women are represented as falling into the utmost terror and amazement immediately upon their entering into the sepulchre, and continuing under the same consternation till they were met flying from thence by Christ himself. Under such a disorder of mind, can we suppose them capable of recollecting the predictions of Christ about his resurrection? considering the proofs of their accomplishment arising from the state of the sepulchre? and persuading themselves at once that he was not only

risen from the dead, but would personally appear to his disciples? and then immediately upon this conviction, fancying they saw an angel, and heard him assure them in a distinct manner that Christ was risen, call them to view the place where he had been laid, and bid them tell his disciples that he would meet them in Galilee. In a word, if this supposed illusion proceeded from a strong persuasion that Christ was risen from the dead, whence arose that belief? If that belief arose from a cool reflection upon the predictions of our Saviour, and the state of the sepulchre, (the cause of Saint John's faith,) whence came their terror? which, if not previous to the apparition of the angel, was at least prior to the words, "Be not affrighted," with which he first accosted them. If it be urged, that this terror was of the nature of those causeless and unaccountable terrors called panics, it may be answered, that this is giving us a name instead of a reason, and is, in effect, saying just nothing at all, or saying no more than that they were affrighted, but nobody can tell why or wherefore. 6*thly*, It is observable, that the speech of the angel to the women consists of ten distinct particulars, as, 1. "Be not affrighted; 2. Ye seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified; 3. He is risen; 4. He is not here; 5. Behold the place where they laid him; 6. But go your way, tell his disciples; 7. And Peter; 8. That he goeth before you into Galilee; 9. There shall ye see him; 10. As he said unto you." The order and connection of which several particulars, are no less remarkable than their number; and, therefore, taking both these considerations into the account, I leave any one to judge whether it be conceivable that women under so great a terror and distraction of mind, as to fancy they saw and heard an angel when there was no such thing, should be able to compose a speech for this phantom of their fear and imagination, containing so much matter, order, and reason, and proceeding upon the supposition that they were not then convinced that Christ was risen from the dead, though the belief of his resurrection is presumed not only to have preceded, but even to have occasioned this illusion.

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this first appearance of the angel to the women, because the settling the nature of that will save us the trouble of entering into a particular discussion of the rest; the several articles of which will fall under one or other of the foregoing observations. All I shall do, therefore, is, to note the different circumstances observable in each of them, and from thence endeavour to raise another argument for the truth and reality of all.

The vision we have just now considered, was of one angel; that seen by Mary Magdalene was of two; as was likewise that reported by Joanna and those with her. And whereas the first angel was found by the women, upon their entering into the sepulchre, sitting on the right side, the two last mentioned appearances were abrupt and sudden. For the angels which Mary Magdalene discovered sitting, one at the head, and the other at the feet where the body of Jesus had been laid, were not seen by Peter and John, who just before had entered into the sepulchre, and viewed every part of it with great attention; and Joanna, and those with her, had been some time in the sepulchre before they saw any angels; which angels seem also to have appeared to them in a different attitude from those seen by Mary Magdalene, and by the other Mary and Salome. As the number of the angels, and the manner of their appearance, was different, so likewise were the words spoken by them to the women, and the behaviour of the women upon those several occasions: Mary and Salome were seized with fear, and fled from the sepulchre in the utmost terror and amazement; Joanna, and those with her, were struck with awe and reverence, and bowed down their faces to the earth; but Mary Magdalene seems to have been so immersed in grief at not being able to find the body of the Lord, as to have taken little or no notice of so extraordinary an appearance; she sees, hears, and answers the angels without any emotion, and without quitting the object upon which her mind was wholly fixed, till she was awakened out of her trance by the well-known voice of her master calling her by her name. But here let us stop a little, and ask a question or two. Could this appearance, then, be an illusion? Could a mind so occupied, so lost in one idea, attend at the same time to the production of so many others of a different kind? Or could her imagination be strong enough to see and converse with angels, and yet too weak to make any impression on her, or call off her attention from a less affecting, less surprising subject? Real angels, indeed, she may be supposed to have seen and heard, and not to have regarded them; but apparitions raised by her own fancy could not have failed engaging her notice. For although, when we are awake, we cannot avoid perceiving the ideas excited in us by the organs of sensation, yet is it, in most instances, in our power to give to them what degree of attention we think fit; and hence it comes to pass, that when we are earnestly employed in any action, intent upon any thought, or transported by any passion, we see, and hear, and feel a thousand things, of which we take no more notice, than if we were utterly insensible of them, as every one's daily experience can testify: but to the ideas not proceeding immediately from sensation, but formed within us by the internal operation of our minds,

we cannot but attend; because we are active in their production, and because in their own nature they can exist no longer than while we attend to them. Of this kind are all the phantoms that haunt our sleeping or waking dreams; for so all ecstasies, deliriums, and the ravings of madness may not improperly be called; and whatever may be the physical cause that, upon these occasions, sets the mind to work, and influences her imagination, she is certainly more than passive in these productions, and is generally so attentive to them, as to disregard, during her transports, all the importunities of external objects; or to blend and colour with the prevailing idea all those arising from the information of the senses. From all which it is evident, that the mind cannot apply herself to the contemplation of more than one object at a time; which, as long as it keeps possession, excludes or obscures all others. Mary Magdalene, therefore, having taken it strongly into her head, upon seeing the stone rolled away from the mouth of the sepulchre, that some persons had removed the body of the Lord; in which notion she was still more confirmed, after her return to the sepulchre with Peter and John, and grieving at being thus disappointed of paying her last duty to her deceased master, whose body, as Peter his most zealous, and John his most beloved disciple, knew nothing of the removal of it, she might imagine was got into the hands of his enemies, to be exposed perhaps once more to fresh insults and indignities, or at least to be deprived of the pious offices which the duty and affection of his followers and disciples were preparing to perform,—Mary Magdalene, I say, falling into a passion of grief at this unexpected distress, and abandoning herself to all the melancholy reflections that must naturally arise from it, with her eyes suffused with tears, and thence discerning more imperfectly, looking as it were by accident, and while she was thinking on other matters, into the sepulchre, and seeing angels, might, according to the reasoning above laid down, give but little heed to them; as not perceiving on a sudden, and under so great a cloud of sorrow, the tokens of any thing extraordinary in that appearance. She might take them perhaps for two young men, which was the form assumed by those who appeared to the other women, without reflecting at first that it was impossible they should have been in the sepulchre without being seen by John and Peter, and improbable that they should have entered into it after their departure, without having been observed by her. Intent upon what passed within her own bosom, she did not give herself time to consider and examine external objects; and therefore knew not even Christ himself, who appeared to her in the same sudden and miraculous manner; but, "supposing him to be the gardener," begged him to tell her, if he had removed the body, where he had laid it, that she might take it away. By which question, and the answer she had made to the angels immediately before, we may perceive what her thoughts were so earnestly employed about; and thence conclude still farther, that the angels were not the creatures of her imagination, since they were plainly not the objects of her attention. The appearance therefore of the angels was real. But to return from this digression.

If the several appearances of the angels, examined separately, may be shewn to carry with them evident marks of reality and truth, the considering and comparing them together will set that point in a yet stronger light; such, we presume, as will entirely clear up every doubt in the minds of those who seem inclined to believe any thing possible, but that the gospel should be true. For both the number, the manner, the variety, and nature of the circumstances of these visions, and their being seen by different persons at different times, make it, according to the natural course of things, utterly incredible that there should have been in them either illusion or imposture. Many instances perhaps of illusions in single persons, and even in numbers (for nothing is more contagious than superstition and enthusiasm) may be produced; how well authenticated, it will be time enough to inquire when we know what they are. But I believe it will be generally found, upon a strict examination, that whenever any number of people have fallen into such an illusion, as, by the force of imagination only, to hear and see spectres and apparitions, the imagination, or artifice of some one among them, hath given birth to the phantom; and working upon minds already disposed to superstition, enthusiasm, or credulity, or cunningly prepared perhaps for that particular occasion, hath led them easily to see and hear things, that existed only in their own prepossessed and over-heated fancies. But nothing of all this can be pretended in the present case. The women, by whom these different visions of angels were severally seen, had no communication with each other during the time of these appearances, as is evident from the whole tenor of this history: Mary and Salome were fled from the sepulchre before Mary Magdalene returned; and Mary Magdalene was departed from thence again, before Joanna, and those with her, came thither; so that they could not catch the illusion from one another; and that their minds, at the time of their coming to the sepulchre, were very far from being disposed to form imaginations of Christ's being risen from the dead, is evident from the business that carried them thither. They came to perform the last offices usually paid to the

dead; and by embalming the body, to complete the interment of their deceased master; which by the coming on of the Sabbath, they had been obliged to leave unfinished; and when, upon entering into the sepulchre, they found not the body, it was more natural for them to think, with Mary Magdalene, that some persons had taken it away, and laid it they knew not where, than to conclude it was risen from the dead. And it is plain, that Joanna, and those with her, were in this way of thinking; for when they entered in, and found not the body of the Lord Jesus, they, says Saint Luke, "were much perplexed thereabout;" that is, they knew not what was become of the body, could not account for its being missing, and were therefore in great distress and anxiety about it; which would not have happened, had they believed that he had risen from the dead.

If, from what has been said, it may seem reasonable to conclude, that the appearances of the angels were not the effects of illusion, the phantoms of a distempered visionary mind, it will, I think, be more easily granted, that they were not the operations of artifice and imposture. For, without examining who could be the actors, or what the motives of an imposture of this kind, there are evidences enough, arising from the circumstances of these several appearances, to shew that the powers that produced them were more than human: such, for example, is the earthquake occasioned by the descent of the first angel; the amazing brightness of his countenance, which, Saint Matthew tells us, was like lightning; and the prodigious strength, which appeared in his singly rolling away a stone, that was large enough to close up the entrance into the sepulchre; and what was common to all the angels, the faculty of becoming visible or invisible as they thought proper. These certainly were characteristical marks of an agent endowed with privileges and powers superior to the limited abilities of man, whose operations cannot go farther than his knowledge of the laws and powers of nature; and how far short of such wonderful effects as these that knowledge would carry him, I leave the most ingenious professor of natural magic to determine.

Sect. XIV.—2*d*, I come now, in the second place, to consider the appearances of Christ himself to the women, which were two, the first to Mary Magdalene, the second to the other Mary and Salome. But I shall not have occasion to dwell long upon this head, since the appearances of the angels having been proved to be real, put these appearances of Christ more out of doubt and suspicion. The angels affirmed that he was risen from the dead; and if he was risen, it was natural to expect he would appear. The main difficulty consisted in his getting loose from the bands of death, and breaking the prison of the grave; and therefore, whoever, upon the testimony of the angels, believed the resurrection (as all those must have done who acknowledged them to be real angels) would not, if they saw Christ himself, be very apt to call in question the reality of his appearance. But though the testimony of angels, affirming that Christ was risen from the dead, renders his appearing afterwards less liable to doubt and question; yet, before we admit the reality of every such appearance as may be pretended, I grant it is reasonable to expect some farther proofs, though perhaps not so many or so strong, as if no such previous evidence had been given. And in the case of Mary and Salome, it may be suggested, that their very belief of the resurrection of Christ, joined to the disorder and amazement they were then under, might help to convince them too easily of the reality of his appearance, though at the same time it might be nothing but a spectre of their imagination, and a mere illusion. Let us therefore examine what evidence may be collected from the account given of this appearance, to induce us to think that these women were not deceived; and the evidence, I believe, will be found sufficient. They had the attestation of their sight, their hearing, and their feeling: by the two first the voice and countenance of their Lord might be known; and by the last they might be assured that it was no spectre which they heard and saw, but a body consisting of flesh and bones. One of these proofs, indeed, was wanting to Mary Magdalene,—Christ forbade her to touch him; and yet, any one, who considers with due attention the circumstances of this appearance, will find sufficient reason to be persuaded that it was Christ himself who appeared to her. For, 1*st*, He had stood by her some time, had spoken to her, and she had answered him, before she knew him to be Christ: on the contrary, she took him for the gardener; by all which it is manifest, that the spectre, if it was one, was not of her creating.* Her mind was otherwise engaged; and had it been either at leisure, or disposed to raise apparitions, it is most likely she would have called upon some person, with whom she had more acquaintance and concern than a keeper of a garden, whom probably she had never known nor seen before. 2*dly*, He called her by her name, by which as it appeared that he knew her, so did she, it seems, discover him; for turning immediately about, she accosted him with the respectful title of "Rabboni," my master; and, as may be inferred from the ensuing words of Christ, offered to embrace him. His voice and his countenance convinced her that it was Christ himself. 3*dly*, In these words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to

* See the preceding Section, p. 33.

my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," is contained a most clear proof that it was Christ himself who uttered them. To understand this, it must be remembered, that these words allude to a long discourse (John, xiv. xv. and xvi.) which our Saviour held to his disciples the very night in which he was betrayed; wherein he told them, that he should leave them for a short time, ("a little while, and ye shall not see me,") and that he would come to them again, though but for a short time, ("and again a little while, and ye shall see me,") "because," added he, "I go to my Father." By the phrase, "I go to my Father," Christ meant his final quitting the world, as he himself explained it to his disciples, who did not then understand either of the above-cited expressions. "I came forth from the Father," says he, "and am come into the world; again, I leave the world, and go to the Father," John, xvi. 28. But lest they should fall into despair at being thus forsaken by him, for whom they had forsaken all the world, he at the same time promised to send them a Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, who should "teach them all things, bring to their minds whatsoever he had said unto them," (xiv. 26;) "should guide them into all truth, shew them things to come," (xvi. 13.) "and abide with them for ever;" (xiv. 16.) and that "whoever believed in him should be able to do greater works (that is, miracles) than he did, because he was to go to the Father," (xvi. 12.) and that, finally, though they for a season should be sorrowful, yet should "their sorrow be turned into joy, and that joy should no man take from them," John, xvi. 20, 22. These were magnificent promises; promises which, as the disciples could not but remember Christ had made to them, so they might be assured that no one but Christ was able to make them good; and therefore, when they came to reflect seriously upon the import of these words, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father; but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God," it was impossible for them to conclude otherwise than that it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke to Mary Magdalene. For as the latter expression, "I ascend to my Father," &c. implied a remembrance, and consequently a renewal of those promises, which were to take place after his ascension to the Father; so did the former, "I am not yet ascended to my Father," give them encouragement to expect the performance of that other promise of his coming to them again before his ascension, by giving them to understand, that he had not yet quitted this world; and I take Christ's forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch (or embrace) him, to have been meant as a signification of his intending to see her and his disciples again; just as, in ordinary life, when one friend says to another, "Don't take leave, for I am not going yet," he means to let him know that he purposes to see him again before he sets out upon his journey. That this is the true import of the words "Touch me not," is, in my opinion, evident, not only from the reason subjoined in the words immediately following, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father," (by which expression, as I have shewed above, Christ meant he had not finally quitted the world,) but from these farther considerations: Christ, by shewing himself first to Mary Magdalene, intended, doubtless, to give her a distinguishing mark of his favour, and therefore cannot reasonably be supposed to have designed at the same time to have put a slight upon her, by refusing her a pleasure which he granted not long after to the other Mary and Salome; and yet this must be supposed, if "Touch me not" be understood to imply a prohibition to Mary Magdalene to embrace him, for any reason consistent with the regard shewn to the other women, and different from that now contended for, namely, because he intended to see her and his disciples again. On the contrary, if these words be taken to signify a put-off to some fitter opportunity, they will be so far from importing any unkindness or reprehension to Mary Magdalene, that they may rather be looked upon as a gracious assurance, a kind of friendly engagement to come to her again; and in this sense they correspond exactly with Christ's purpose in sending this message by her to his disciples; which, as I have observed before, was to let them know that he remembered his promise of coming to them again, and was still in a condition to perform it, not having quitted this world; and of his intention to perform it, this his refusing to admit the affectionate or reverential embraces of "Mary Magdalene, who loved much, for much had been forgiven to her," was an earnest, as his coming to them again would be a pledge of his resolution to acquit himself in due time of those promises, which were not to take effect till after his final departure out of this world. And thus will this whole discourse of our Saviour to Mary Magdalene be in all its parts intelligible, rational, and coherent; whereas, if it be supposed that Mary Magdalene was forbidden to touch Christ for some mystical reason, contained in the words, "for I am not yet ascended to my Father," it will be very difficult to understand either the meaning or intent of that message, which she was commanded to carry to the disciples; and still more difficult to account for his suffering, not long after, the embraces of the other Mary and Salome. To the same, or even greater difficulties, will that interpretation of this passage be liable, which

supposes, that the prohibtion to Mary Magdalene was grounded upon the spiritual nature of Christ's body, which, it is presumed, was not sensible to touch or feeling. And indeed, both these reasons for the behaviour of Christ to Mary Magdalene are overturned, by his contrary behaviour to the other Mary and Salome. But if the sense I contend for be admitted, it will be no difficult matter to account for this difference of his behaviour on those two occasions. Why he forbade Mary Magdalene to touch him, has already been explained; why he permitted the other Mary and Salome "to hold him by the feet and worship him," I shall now endeavour to shew. These last mentioned women, as Saint Mark informs us, were so terrified and amazed at the sight and words of the angel who appeared to them in the sepulchre, that, although they (Matt. xxviii. 8,) ran with a design to tell the disciples what they had heard and seen, as the angel had commanded them, yet, through the greatness of their confusion and disorder, they had neglected to deliver this important message to some whom they saw in their way; for so, with all the commentators, I understand these words of Saint Mark, "neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid."* That this testimony therefore of the angel to the resurrection of Christ, and the assurance given to the two disciples, that they should see their master in Galilee, might not be lost either by the women's forgetting, through the greatness of their amazement, what the angel had said to them, or, through a suspicion of its having been all a mere illusion, neglecting or scrupling to tell it, Christ himself thought proper to appear to them, to calm their minds, disperse their terror, obviate their doubts. With this view, he first accosts them with the gracious salutation of All hail! then suffers them not only to approach him, but to "hold him by the feet and worship him;" and lastly, bidding them dismiss their fears, orders them, in confirmation of what the angel had said to them, to tell his disciples from him to "go into Galilee," assuring them with his own mouth, "that they should see him there." Every word, we see, tended to inspire them with courage and confidence; and the gracious influence of every word upon their minds, could not but be rendered still more powerful and efficacious by his suffering them to embrace him. After this familiar instance of his favour and complacence, and this sensible proof of his being really and bodily risen from the dead, there could be no room left for doubt or terror: conviction, certainty, and joy, must have banished those uneasy passions for ever from their breasts. And hence it appears, that the different conduct of Christ on these two occasions, was owing to the different circumstances attending them; to which it was most wisely suited. Mary Magdalene's grief (the only disorder of mind she then laboured under) for the supposed loss of her master's body, was soon dispersed, upon her hearing him call her by her name, and seeing him stand by her; she was immediately convinced that it was Christ, and testified her conviction by giving him the title of Rabboni, my master. She wanted not (and therefore there was no need of giving her) any farther proofs; but satisfied with what she had seen and heard, she went to the disciples, and told them she "had seen the Lord," and that he had said such and such things to her. But terror, the most untractable of all passions, when excessive, had seized upon the other Mary and Salome—a terror which, as it proceeded from the unexpected and supernatural appearance of an angel, was more likely to be confirmed than removed by the like appearance of Christ, had he not proceeded gently with them, and by his gracious words and demeanour given them encouragement and permission to familiarize themselves with him by degrees, and take, in their own way, what proofs they thought proper to remove their fears or doubts, and convince them that their affectionate and beloved master was in reality restored to them again from the grave.

But besides the assurance given by Christ to his disciples, in the words here spoken by Mary Magdalene, of his intention to perform his

* That these words, "Neither said they any thing to any man," must be limited to some certain time, will, I believe, be readily allowed; for it cannot be imagined, that after all the other appearances of the angels, &c. were published, these women only never opened their lips to any man about what they had seen and heard at the sepulchre. The question then will be, How long they may be supposed to have forborne speaking of it? And this, I think, was no longer than during the time of their flying from the sepulchre, and until they were met by Christ himself; because the only reason here assigned for their "not saying any thing to any man," namely, "for they were afraid," (or affrighted rather,) being removed by Christ's appearing to them, &c. it is reasonable to believe, (if it is not implied,) that their silence lasted no longer than the only cause of it, their terror. Besides, as Saint Mark breaks off the narration of what happened to these women very abruptly, short of Christ's appearing to them, in order to relate his appearance to Mary Magdalene, which indeed was previous to it, though subsequent to the appearance of the angel seen by these women at the sepulchre, what he says of their "not saying any thing to any man" cannot be taken to extend beyond the period where he chose to break off his narration, without supposing him guilty of a needless impropriety. And if these words, "Neither said they any thing to any man," be construed to signify that they did not tell what they had seen and heard to some, whom they saw as they were flying from the sepulchre, it seems rational to conclude, that these were some of the disciples to whom they were ordered to deliver the message of the angel, and to whom they would probably have delivered it had they not been under so great a terror and amazement. For had the persons whom they saw been any other than the disciples of Jesus, it is not likely that Saint Mark would have taken any notice of their "not saying any thing to any man," since it is reasonable to imagine they would not, even though they had not been affrighted, have told the message of the angel, &c. to any but the disciples; and as the time of Peter and John's running to the sepulchre, upon the first report of Mary Magdalene, coincides with that of these women flying from it, it is no improbable conjecture that these were the persons whom they saw in their way, at a distance, perhaps, and coming by a different road to the sepulchre; especially if it be considered that, as the words of Saint Mark, "Neither said they," &c. seem to carry with them an imputation of neglect upon these women, though he at the same time both accounts for it and excuses it, by adding, "for they were affrighted;" so the same evangelist hath before acquainted us (ver. 7,) that they were ordered by the angel to deliver the message he gave them to Peter in particular.

promises of coming to them again, &c. I cannot help thinking he had a farther meaning, which, though not so obvious, is, however, in my opinion, equally deducible from those words with the other just now mentioned. That remarkable expression, I ascend to my Father, Christ undoubtedly made use of upon this occasion to recall to his disciples' minds the discourse he held to them three nights before, in which he explained so clearly what he meant by "going to his Father," that they said to him, "Lo! now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no parable," John, xvi. 29. But this was not the only expression that puzzled them; they were as much in the dark as to the meaning of, "A little while and ye shall not see me, and again a little while and ye shall see me," which they likewise confessed they did not understand. But Christ did not think fit to clear up their doubts at that time, and left those words to be expounded by the events to which they severally related, and which were then drawing on apace. For that very night he was betrayed, and seized, and deserted by his disciples, as he himself had foretold but a very few hours before, upon their professing "to believe that he came forth from God:" The next day he was crucified, expired upon the cross, and was buried. Upon this melancholy catastrophe the disciples could be no longer at a loss to understand what Christ meant, when he said to them, "A little while and ye shall not see me." He was gone from them, and, as their fears suggested, gone for ever, notwithstanding he had expressly told them, that he would come to them again; and to those words, "A little while and ye shall not see me," had added, "and again a little while and ye shall see me." This latter expression, one would think, was full as intelligible as the former; and as the one, now expounded by the event, was plainly a prophecy of his death, so must the other be understood as a prophecy of his resurrection from the dead. But if they understood it in that sense, they were very far from having a right notion of the resurrection from the dead; as is evident from their imagining, when Christ first shewed himself to them after his passion, that they saw a spirit; even though they had just before declared their belief "that he was risen indeed, and had appeared to Simon." The resurrection of the body, it should seem from this instance, made no part of their notion of the resurrection from the dead. To lead them therefore into a right understanding of this most important article of faith, Christ, in speaking to Mary Magdalene, and by her to his disciples, makes use of terms which strongly imply his being really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead. "I am not yet," says he, "ascended to my Father; but go unto my brethren, and say unto them, I ascend unto my Father," &c. The words "I go to my Father," Christ, as has already been observed, explained by the well understood phrase of leaving the world; and to this explanation the words immediately foregoing give so great a light, that it is impossible to mistake his meaning. The whole passage runs thus, "I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world; and again I leave the world, and go to the Father." By the expression, "I am come into the world," Christ certainly meant to signify his being and conversing visibly and bodily upon earth; and therefore by the other expression, "I leave the world," he must have intended to denote the contrary to all this, namely, his ceasing to be and converse visibly and bodily upon earth; and so undoubtedly the disciples understood him to mean, when they said unto him, "Now speakest thou plainly, and speakest no parable." But as they very well knew that the usual road, by which all men quitted this world, lay through the gates of death, and were assured their master had trodden that irremeable path, they might naturally conclude, that what he had said to them about "leaving the world and going to his Father," was accomplished in his death; and consistently with that notion might imagine that, by his coming to them again, no more was intended, than his appearing to them in the same manner as many persons have been thought and said to appear after their decease. To guard against this double error, which Christ, to whom the thoughts of all hearts are open, perceived in the minds of his disciples, he plainly intimates to them in the words, "I am not yet ascended to my Father, but—I do (or shall) ascend to my Father," that his dying, and his final leaving the world, were distinct things; the latter of which was still to come, though the former was past. He had indeed died like other mortals, and had, like them, left the world for a season, as he himself had often foretold them should come to pass; but he was now risen from the dead, returned into the world, and should not leave it finally till he ascended to his Father. Of his being returned into the world, his appearing to Mary Magdalene was doubtless intended for a proof; and yet of this it could be no proof at all, if what she saw was no more than what is commonly called a spirit; since the spirits of many people have been thought to appear after their decease, who notwithstanding are supposed to have as effectually left this world by their death, as those who have never appeared at all. Lazarus, like Christ, had died, and was by his quickening word recalled to life, which consists in the animation of the body by its union with the soul. Now, had Christ called up nothing but the spirit of Lazarus, and left his body to putrify and perish in the grave, would not Lazarus, I ask, have still been reputed dead, and consequently considered as out of

this world, though his spirit had appeared to a thousand different people? If Christ therefore was risen from the dead, as the angels affirmed he was; if he had not yet finally left the world, as the words, "I am not yet ascended to my Father," plainly import; and if his appearing to Mary Magdalene was intended for a proof of those two points, as undoubtedly it was: it will follow that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead; that he was still in the world in the same manner as when he "came forth from the Father, and came into the world;" and that it was he himself, and not a spirit without flesh and bones, that appeared to Mary Magdalene.

Before I conclude this argument, I must beg leave to make one observation more upon the term "ascend," twice used by our Saviour in the compass of these few words. In the discourse here alluded to by Christ, he told his disciples that he should go to his Father, and he now bids Mary Magdalene tell them that he should "ascend" to his Father, — a variation in the phrase which, I am persuaded, had its particular meaning, and that not very difficult to be discovered. For, as by the former expression he intended, as we have seen, to signify in general his final departure out of this world, so by the latter is the particular manner of that departure intimated; and doubtless with a view of letting his disciples know the precise time, after which they should no longer expect to see and converse with him upon earth, but wait for the coming of that Comforter, which he promised to send them in his room; and who, unless he departed from them, was not to come. Jesus made frequent visits to his disciples after his passion, (Acts, i. 3,) "being seen of them," says Saint Luke, "forty days, and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God." Between some of these visits were pretty long intervals, (John, xx. 21,) during which he seems to have disappeared, that is, not to have resided upon earth. Had Christ, therefore, left his disciples without any mark or token, by which they might be able to distinguish his final departure from those that were only temporary, they would probably have taken each visit for the last; or have lingered, after his final departure, in a fruitless expectation of seeing him again; either of which states of uncertainty, and especially the last, were liable to many inconveniencies, to doubts, and jealousies, and fears, which it was goodness, as well as wisdom in our Saviour to prevent. Nor was the preventing these evils the only advantage that flowed from this early intimation of the manner of Christ's final departure out of this world, implied in the words, "I ascend to my Father," and verified in his ascension into heaven. For as this could not have been effected without the power of God co-operating with him, so neither could it have been fore-known by him, without the communication of that Spirit, which only knows the counsels of God. When the disciples, therefore, beheld their master taken up into heaven, and received out of their sight by a cloud of glory,* they could not but know assuredly, that this was the event foretold about forty days before to Mary Magdalene; and knowing that, could no longer doubt whether it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke those prophetic words to her, how little credit soever they had given to her, when she first told them she "had seen the Lord."

And thus, (as I have endeavoured to make appear,) in these comprehensive words of Christ, spoken to Mary Magdalene, "Touch me not, for I am not yet ascended to my Father, but go to my brethren, and say to them, I ascend to my Father," are implied three particulars. 1*st*, A renewal of the several promises made by him to his disciples, the night in which he was betrayed; one of which was the promise of coming to them again before his final departure out of this world: of his intention to perform which promise, I take his forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch or embrace him, to be an earnest or token. 2*dly*, An intimation, that as his death and his final departure out of this world were two distinct things, the latter of which was yet to come; so by his rising from the dead, they were to understand his returning and being in the world, in the same manner with those who have not yet quitted the world by death, and consequently that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead; of which his appearing to Mary Magdalene, and saying those words, was an undoubted evidence. And, 3*dly*, A prophetical account of the manner of his departing finally out of the world, namely, by ascending into heaven. From which several particulars it was impossible, as I said before, for the disciples to draw any other conclusion than that it was Christ himself who appeared and spoke to Mary Magdalene. I do not say the disciples must necessarily have perceived, at the very first hearing these words, the several inferences which I have drawn from them; but when they came to consider them attentively, to reflect upon what their master had said to them, the night in which he was betrayed, (to which these words evidently referred,) and when, after having handled his feet and hands, they were by their own senses convinced that he was bodily risen from the dead; and lastly, when they had seen those words, "I ascend to my Father," verified in his ascending into heaven before their eyes: then, I think, they could hardly avoid perceiving the several inferences, and drawing

* Acts, i. 9. See Whitby on this place.

from them the conclusion above mentioned. For if it was not Christ who appeared to Mary Magdalene, it must have been either some spirit, good or bad; or some man who, to impose upon her, counterfeited the person and voice of Christ; or lastly, the whole must have been forged and invented by her. The first of these suppositions is blasphemous, the second absurd, and the third improbable. For allowing her to have been capable of making a lie, for the carrying on an imposture, from which she could reap no benefit, and to have been informed of what our Saviour had spoken to his disciples the night in which he was betrayed, which does not appear, it must have been either extreme madness or folly in her to put the credit of her tale upon events, such as the appearing of Christ to his disciples, and his ascending into heaven, which were so far from being in the number of contingencies, that they were not even within the powers and operations of what are called natural causes.

The same answer may be made to the supposition, that the appearance of Christ to the other Mary and Salome was likewise a forgery of those women; and with this I shall conclude the second head.

Sect. XV. — 3*d*, Of the many appearances of Christ to his disciples, for the forty days after his passion, the sacred writers have mentioned particularly but very few; imagining, doubtless, those few sufficient to prove that fundamental article of the Christian faith, the resurrection of Jesus. And, indeed, whoever attends to the nature and variety of the evidence contained even in those few particulars which they have transmitted to us, cannot, I think, but acknowledge that those, who were appointed to be the witnesses of the resurrection, had every kind of proof that, in the like circumstances, either the most scrupulous could demand, or the most incredulous imagine. This I doubt not but to be able to make appear in the course of the following observations; in which I shall confine myself to the examination of those appearances only, whose circumstances the evangelical historians have thought proper to record, and upon which the faith of the apostles was principally established.

The first of these, though but barely mentioned by Saint Mark, (xvi.) is very particularly related by Saint Luke (xxiv.) in the following words: "And behold, two of them went the same day to a village called Emmaus, which was from Jerusalem about threescore furlongs; and they talked together of all these things which had happened. And it came to pass, that while they communed together, and reasoned, Jesus himself drew near, and went with them: but their eyes were holden that they should not know him. And he said unto them, What manner of communications are these, that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad? And one of them, whose name was Cleopas, answering, said to him, Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem, and hast not known the things which are come to pass there in these days? And he said to them, What things? And they said to him, Concerning Jesus of Nazareth, which was a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people; and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death, and have crucified him: but we trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel; and besides all this, to-day is the third day since these things were done. Yea, and certain women also of our company made us astonished, which were early at the sepulchre; and when they found not his body, they came, saying, that they had also seen a vision of angels, which said that he was alive. And certain of them that were with us, went to the sepulchre, and found it even so as the women had said; but him they saw not. Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself. And they drew nigh unto the village whither they went, and he made as though he would have gone farther. But they constrained him, saying, Abide with us, for it is towards evening, and the day is far spent. And he went in to tarry with them. And it came to pass as he sat at meat with them, he took bread, and blessed it, and brake, and gave to them. And their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight. And they said one to another, Did not our hearts burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the Scriptures? And they rose up the same hour, and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven gathered together, and them that were with them, saying, the Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon. And they told what things were done in the way, and how he was known of them in breaking of bread."

Two objections have been made to the credibility of this fact: 1*st*, That these disciples knew not Jesus during the whole time of his walking, conversing, and sitting at meat with them; 2*dly*, That when, upon his breaking bread, &c. their eyes were opened, and they are said to have known him, he vanished so suddenly out of their sight, that they seem not to have had time enough to satisfy those doubts, which must have arisen from their having conversed with him so long without knowing him. To the first of these objections

the evangelist himself furnishes us with an answer, telling us, that "their eyes were holden that they should not know him;" which, as it will not be pretended to be above the operation of him whom the apostle of the Gentiles styles "the power of God," so have I already shewed it to be a proceeding not unworthy of him whom the same inspired writer, in the same place, calls also "the wisdom of God." He threw a mist before their corporeal eyes, that he might, by the pure and unprejudiced light of reason only, remove from before their internal sight, that strong delusion, which held their understanding from knowing the true import of those types and prophecies, by which his sufferings, death, and resurrection, were foreshewn. He disguised himself, but laid open the Scriptures, which till then had appeared to them in another form; and having, by an exposition of Moses and the prophets, which made their hearts burn within them, stript off those vails and colours, which the worldly and carnal-minded scribes and pharisees had laid over them, and set them before their eyes in their genuine shape and lustre, he in the next place disclosed himself, and left them convinced, as well from the Scriptures, as from their senses, that he was risen from the dead. Which leads me to consider the second objection, founded on his vanishing out of their sight so soon after his discovering himself to them.

And here I shall observe, 1*st*, That it appears they had no doubt but that the person who joined them on the way to Emmaus, and opened the Scriptures to them, was the same whom, upon his breaking of bread, &c. they took to be Jesus. 2*dly*, That upon their taking him to be Jesus, they must have been sensible of some alteration, either in themselves or in him, by which they were enabled to discover the mistake they were under while they knew him not. 3*dly*, That alteration must to them have appeared supernatural and miraculous, as it is implied to have been in this phrase, "their eyes were opened, and they knew him;" as must also his vanishing (or disappearing) from their sight. And as from these particulars it could not but be evident to them, that the person whom, when their eyes were opened, they, from his countenance, &c. knew to be Jesus, was endowed with powers more than human; so was it impossible for them to conclude it to be any other than Jesus himself, without blasphemously supposing that God would permit any spirit, whether good or bad, to assume the person of his beloved Son, with a view of countenancing or carrying on a falsehood and imposture; especially as, in the conversation he had held with them by the way, he had opened the Scriptures, and had shewed them from Moses and all the prophets, that Christ was to suffer, and die, and rise again from the dead. But besides the clearing up all their doubts, arising from his sufferings and death, which had staggered their faith in him whom, till then, "they trusted to be him who should redeem Israel," it is very probable, from what they say about their "hearts burning within them while he opened to them the Scriptures," that they perceived, either in his manner or in his doctrine, some lively marks and characters of that dignity and authority which was wont to distinguish him so much from the ordinary teachers of Israel, the scribes and pharisees. And, not to repeat what I have said before, about the probability of Christ's having upon this occasion made use of some gesture or phrase peculiar to himself, in breaking and blessing the bread, I shall only add one remark from Grotius,* namely, that since it was the custom among the Jews, for the master of the feast, or the most honourable guest, immediately after blessing the cup, to take the bread, give thanks over it, break it, and after eating a bit of it, to distribute it round the table, Christ, by this action, declared himself something more than what those disciples had hitherto taken him for, a stranger and traveller whom they had picked up by the way, and constrained to abide with them; and by that declaration awakened their attention to that discovery of himself which followed immediately upon it, and to which this solemn and religious act was certainly no improper introduction. The inference that is naturally deducible from these several observations, is, that these two disciples, even upon the supposition that Christ disappeared immediately after their eyes were opened, and they knew him, had sufficient reason to be assured that it was he himself who had walked, conversed, and sat at meat with them; and consequently that he was risen from the dead, according to what the angels had told the women, who had been that morning at the sepulchre.

Sect. XVI.—The next appearance of Christ, that I shall take notice of, and that to which all those before mentioned were preparatory, was to the eleven, and those with them, on the evening of the same day. This appearance is mentioned by three of the evangelists, one relating one particular, and another another; out of each of whose gospels I shall therefore take such circumstances as are not related by the others, and putting the scattered parts together, compose from all of them one entire relation.

"Then the same day," namely, the day of the resurrection, "at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut, where the disciples were assembled for fear of

* In locum. See also Drusius, ibid.

the Jews," (John, xx. 19.) "while they sat at meat," (Mark, xvi. 14,) immediately after the two disciples from Emmaus had finished their relation, "came Jesus and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be with you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit." (Luke, xxiv. 37.) "And he, upbraiding them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them who had seen him after he was risen, (Mark, xvi. 14,) "said unto them, Why are you troubled, and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he shewed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said to them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honey-comb; and he took it, and did eat before them," (Luke, xxiv. 38—43.) "Then were the disciples glad when they saw the Lord," (John, xx. 20.) And he said to them, These are the words which I spake unto you, while I was yet with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms concerning me." (Luke, xxiv. 44.) "Then, breathing on them, and saying, Receive ye the Holy Ghost," (John, xx. 22,) "opened he their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures; and he said to them, Thus it is written, and thus it behoved Christ to suffer; and to rise from the dead the third day. And ye are witnesses of these things." (Luke, xxiv. 45, 46.)

To this I shall add the appearance of Christ to Saint Thomas, that I may bring all the proofs of the resurrection under one view. "But Thomas, one of the twelve, called Didymus, was not with them when Jesus came. The other disciples therefore said to him, We have seen the Lord: But he said to them, Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe. And after eight days, again his disciples were within, and Thomas with them; then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst, and said, Peace be unto you. Then said he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side; and be not faithless, but believing. And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord, and my God! Jesus saith unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed." (John, xx. 24—29.)

The proofs of Christ's being risen from the dead, here exhibited to the disciples, as set forth in the above-cited passages, may be comprised under four heads. 1*st*, The testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen. 2*dly*, The evidences of their own senses. 3*dly*, The exact accomplishment of the "words which he had spoken to them, while he was yet with them." And 4*thly*, The fulfilling "of all the things which were written in the law of Moses, and in the Prophets, and in the Psalms, concerning him." The conclusiveness of all which proofs I shall endeavour to shew in some observations upon each of them. Upon the first I have nothing to add to what I have written already under the second general head,* and the beginning of this, excepting that our Lord, by upbraiding his disciples for not believing those who had seen him after he was risen, took from them all possibility of doubting afterwards of the truth and reality of those appearances, thus confirmed and verified by his own irrefragable testimony. Under the words, "those who had seen him after he was risen," is comprehended likewise his appearance to Simon, mentioned both by Saint Luke, xxiv. 34, and Saint Paul, 1 Cor. xv. 5, as also that to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus. Upon the second head, (namely, the evidence of their own senses) it might, one would imagine, be thought sufficient to observe, that the disciples had the same infallible proofs † (as the author of the Acts calls them) of Christ's being alive after his passion, as they had ever had of his being alive before it. They saw him, saw the particular marks of identity in his person and countenance, in his hands, feet, and side, which had been pierced at his crucifixion; and one of them, who had refused to believe, "except he put his finger into the print of the nails, and thrust his hands into his side," had that farther satisfaction, unreasonable as it was, granted him; they saw him also eat, what they themselves gave him, "a piece of a broiled fish and an honey-comb;" they heard him speak, and were by him commanded to "handle him," and see that he had flesh and bones; a command, ‡ which, doubtless, they obeyed. And yet all these infallible tokens, or proofs, these Τεκμήρια, *certa et indubitata signa*, have been set aside by some pretended philosophers and philosophizing divines, upon no better grounds than their own vain inferences from these words of Saint John, "Then came Jesus, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst:" For taking for granted, what as philosophers it better became

* See the 2*d* head, of the appearances of Christ to the women, p. 35; and the 3*d*, of his appearance to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, p. 40.

† Acts. i. 3. *ἐν πολλοῖς τεκμηρίοις*, by many certain and undoubted proofs or tokens. Quintilian from Aristotle says Τεκμήρια are *indubitata et certissima signa*, as the actions of speaking, walking, eating, and drinking are the Τεκμήρια "undoubted signs" of life.

‡ The words "as ye see me have," strongly imply, that they had received the satisfaction offered them by feeling his hands and feet.

them to have proved, that it is suggested in these words that Jesus passed through the walls, or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change, during his so passing; and having discovered, "that for one solid or material body to pass through another solid or material body, without injuring the form of either, both the passive and passing body remaining the same, is contrary to all the laws of nature," they have concluded, that the body of Christ was not real, that is, a material body, and consequently was incapable of being felt by Saint Thomas, &c. From whence it will follow that the whole story is absurd and false.

In answer to this, I deny that the words, "Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst," imply that "Jesus passed through the walls or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change during his so passing." They seem, indeed, to imply, that he came in miraculously, though not by a miracle that contains a contradiction or impossibility; and I am persuaded that had not Saint John intended to signify that he came in miraculously, he would not twice have mentioned that otherwise trifling circumstance of "the doors being shut." But though a denial without proof be a proper and sufficient answer to an assertion without proof, yet I will give some reasons why the interpretation contended for by these philosophers cannot be the true one. 1*st*, It is not to be presumed, that Saint John, who with the other disciples had received sensible evidence of the reality—that is, the materiality—of Christ's body, should be absurd enough to imagine, at the same time, that it was a spiritual body; which he must have done, had he thought that Jesus passed through the walls or doors, while they remained shut, without either suffering in his own body, or causing in them any change, during his so passing; it required no great depth of philosophy to understand it to be impossible, even to Omnipotence, to cause the body of a man to penetrate through a wall or door, without causing some change or alteration in the one or the other. Neither, 2*dly*, is it to be presumed that Saint John, intending, as it is plain he did by relating the story of Saint Thomas, to acquaint the world that he [Thomas] as well as the other disciples, had, by feeling and examining his master's body, sensible evidence of his being really—that is, bodily—risen from the dead, should be weak enough to insert in his relation a circumstance which tended to prove that the body which Saint Thomas is supposed to have felt, was not a material but a spiritual body, and consequently incapable of being felt and handled. Contradictions and absurdities are not to be presumed in any writer. On the contrary, as it is supposed that every man in his senses has some meaning in what he speaks or writes, so by that meaning only (which is best collected from the drift and tenor of the whole discourse) is the sense of any ambiguous word or sentence in it to be determined; and every interpretation of such ambiguous word or sentence as can be shewn to be inconsistent with the plain meaning of the speaker or writer, is, for that reason, to be rejected. This justice, candour, and common sense require. 3*dly*, By the way of reasoning made use of upon this occasion by these free-reasoning philosophers, the spirituality of the walls, or doors, may as well be inferred as the spirituality of Christ's body; for Christ's body being proved to be material, by being handled by his disciples, &c. and it being admitted that he penetrated through the walls or doors while they remained shut, without suffering, &c. it will follow that the walls or doors had spiritual bodies; since it is contrary to the laws of nature, that one solid or material body should pass, &c.—an argument which would have very well become the philosophical answer to the "Trial of the Witnesses," as being sophistical, ludicrous, and absurd.

Having now given my reasons for rejecting, as false, the interpretation above mentioned, which some have endeavoured to fix upon these words of Saint John, "Jesus came, the doors being shut, and stood in the midst;" and having also allowed, that those words naturally suggest the entrance of our Saviour to have been miraculous; I shall in the next place attempt to shew that the miracle here wrought by Jesus, instead of awakening in the minds of the disciples any suspicion that their senses might have been imposed upon in the examination they took of their Lord's body, (because it is as easy for a power that can control the laws of nature, to excite in us the ideas of hearing, seeing, and feeling, without the real existence of any object of those sensations, as to open a passage for a human body through walls or doors, without making any visible breach in them; this miracle, I say, instead of raising any such suspicion in the disciples,) tended, on the contrary, to remove all their doubts, and convince them effectually that it was Jesus himself in a body consisting of flesh and bones, and not a spirit, which appeared to them.

The disciples, during their conversation with Christ before his passion, had been accustomed to see him work miracles of various kinds, cast out devils, heal all manner of diseases, give sight to the blind, elocution to the dumb, legs and nerves to the lame and paralytic, and life to the dead; and all this by a word, which they had also seen even the winds and seas obey. From this extensive power of controlling the laws of nature,

established by the great Creator himself, joined to the more than human purity of his life and doctrine, the disciples most rationally concluded that he "came forth from God." And therefore as, on the one hand, the power of working miracles was a characteristical mark of Jesus, and consequently his working miracles after his resurrection was one evidence of the identity of his person; so, on the other hand, was the assurance of his coming "forth from the God of truth," founded upon his doing such works "as no man could do unless God was with him," an infallible security to the disciples against the suspicion of his intending to impose upon them. From whence it will follow, that when, upon their fancying they saw a spirit, he assured them it was he himself, and no spirit, which, (says he,) "hath not flesh and bones," as they, by feeling and handling him, "saw he had," they could have no shadow of a pretence either for disbelieving his word, or distrusting their own senses. For, in reality, doth not his appealing to their senses for a confirmation of what he asserted, (namely, that it was he himself and not a spirit,) imply an affirmation that their senses were the proper judges of the point in question, and that he therefore left the determination of it to them? And are not both the parts of this affirmation absolutely false, if it be supposed that the body here assumed by Christ was a spiritual, that is, an immaterial body? And if, instead of the object upon which they were to judge, (namely, a material body, capable of exciting such and such sensations,) a very different thing was substituted, namely, a mere idea of such an object, occasioned by the illusory and suborned evidence of sensations imprinted on their minds by a miraculous power; would not, I say, an appeal, to the judgment of their senses in this case, have been a mockery? And would not the imposing upon their senses, after such a ... peal, have been fraudulent and dishonest? And would not such a proceeding have been absurd as well as dishonest? For, if it be allowed that Jesus had the power of imposing miraculously upon the senses of his disciples, it will not surely be denied that he had the power of entering miraculously into the chamber, where they were assembled, while "the doors were shut." The latter of these two miracles renders the first unnecessary. For if Jesus could in his human body enter into the chamber, while the doors were shut, there was no occasion for him to impose upon the senses of his disciples. And if he had it in his option to work whichever of those miracles he pleased, would it not have been absurd (with reverence be it spoken!) in him to choose that, which was inconsistent with the character of one who came forth from the God of truth, and directly opposite to the design of his appearing to his disciples after his passion; which was, by offering his body to the examination of their senses, to convince them that he was really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead?

The disciples, therefore, who by the mighty signs and wonders done by him before his passion, were convinced that God was with him, could not, upon this occasion, but draw the same conclusion from his entering miraculously into the room while the doors were shut, and as miraculously perceiving the secret doubts and reasonings of their hearts. And though, not understanding what was meant by rising from the dead, they had at first suspected him to be a spirit; yet, having been satisfied of the contrary by handling his body, they had no more reason to distrust the evidence of their senses, than they had formerly, when, after having seen him "walk upon the waves," (Matt. xiv.) and having from thence fallen into the like imagination of his being a spirit, they had been convinced of their mistake by the same kind of proof, namely, by seeing, hearing, and feeling him, eating and conversing with him in the same manner as with other men And indeed there is no intimation in the sacred writers of their having had, upon either of these occasions, any suspicion of fraud or imposture. They were simple plain men, strangers to vain and visionary speculations; and went upon those grounds upon which all men act, however some may talk, who have reasoned themselves out of all the principles of reason. Having, therefore, throughout all their past lives, trusted to the information of their senses, they could not avoid believing them upon the present occasion, especially when they were commanded to believe them, by one whose transcendent knowledge and power manifested him to have a thorough insight into the frame of man, as well as a supreme authority over the laws of nature.

SECT. XVII. — *3dly*, The exact accomplishment of the words, in which our Saviour foretold to his disciples his sufferings, death, and resurrection, will evidently appear by comparing the words of those prophecies with the several circumstances of those events. And, therefore, to enable the reader to make this comparison with the greater ease, I shall first set down the several particulars of the passion, and death, &c. of Christ, and then produce the prophecies corresponding to them.

The sufferings of Jesus, properly so called, took their beginning from the treachery of Judas, one of the twelve, who, (as it is related by all the evangelists, Matt. xxvi. Mark, xiv Luke, xxii. John, xviii.) having received a band of soldiers, &c. from the chief priests, with whom he had bargained for thirty pieces

of silver to deliver him up, went with them to a garden, whither he knew Christ was accustomed to resort, and there, by the sign agreed on, (a kiss,) having pointed him out, put him into their hands, who seizing on him immediately, carried him before the high priest, &c.

This fact was several times foretold by Jesus, at first more obscurely, as in these words, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil," (John, vi. 70,) διάβολος, an informer; and in these, "The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men," (Matt. xvii. 22,) and in others of the same general import; then more plainly at his last supper, to his disciples, who, upon his saying, "Verily I say unto you that one of you shall betray me, were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say to him, Lord is it I?" (Matt. xxvi. 21; Mark, xiv. 18; Luke, xxii. 21.) In answer to which he said, "He that dippeth his hand with me in the dish the same shall betray me." These words, as Grotius* observes, must be taken to come somewhat nearer to a declaration of the person who was to betray Jesus, than those others, "One of you shall betray me:" "Wherefore," adds that learned commentator, "I am persuaded that Judas sat near to Christ, so as to eat out of the same dish or mess with him, there being several dishes or messes on the table." This conjecture is indeed very probable, and gives great light to this whole matter: upon which we may observe still farther, that as the disciples, even after this declaration, were still in doubt of whom he spake, (John, xiii. 22,) it is evident there must have been others besides Judas, who dipped their hands in the same dish with Jesus, otherwise that description had sufficiently made him known, and there had been no occasion for Simon Peter to have beckoned to that disciple, who was leaning on the bosom of Jesus, that he should ask him of whom he spoke? In compliance, therefore, with this demand made to him by Saint John, in the name of all his disciples, and to put an end at once to all their doubts, Jesus told them he would point out the very person to them, saying, "He it is to whom I shall give a sop when I have dipped it; and when he had dipped the sop, he gave it to Judas Iscariot the son of Simon;" who, appearing surprised at being thus pronounced a traitor, either for his farther satisfaction, or to dissemble the wickedness of his heart, himself asked Jesus, if it was he: To whom Jesus answered, "Thou sayest." "And thus" concludes Grotius, "Christ gave proofs of his fore-knowledge by degrees; first including the future traitor in the number of the twelve; then in the lesser number of those who sat next to him; and lastly, by certain and precise marks, pointing out the very person himself." To which I must add, that in order to imprint this prophecy strongly on the minds of his disciples, he introduced it with applying to himself a passage of the Psalms, (xli. 9,) "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me;" and with these remarkable words, "Now I tell you before it come, that when it is come to pass ye may believe that I am he."

2. The next incident is the desertion of the disciples, who, as we learn both from Saint Matthew, (xxvi. 56,) and Saint Mark, (xiv. 50,) upon their master's being seized by the soldiers and servants of the chief priest, who came with Judas, all immediately forsook him and fled.

Of this their desertion Jesus had forewarned them but a very short time before it came to pass, and that in the very pride and confidence of their faith upon their professing to believe that "he came forth from God;" "Then saith Jesus to them, All ye shall be offended because of me this night," or as it is in Saint John, "shall be scattered every man to his own home; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad," Matt. xxvi. 31, Mark, xiv. 27, compared with John, xvi. 32.

3. The third particular is Peter's disowning Christ, recorded in all the evangelists, by whose accounts it appears, that Peter followed Christ at a distance to the palace of the high priest, was let into the court by the means of Saint John, who "spake to her that kept the door, and brought in Peter;" where, standing among the crowd while his master was under examination, he was three several times charged by some who were about him with belonging to Christ, which he as often denied, affirming, with oaths and imprecations, that he did not so much as know him; and immediately after his third denial the cock crew; "and then the Lord turned, and looked upon Peter, and Peter remembered the word of the Lord, and went out and wept bitterly," (Luke, xxii. 61.) The prophecy is as follows: "Verily I say to thee (Peter,) this day, even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny (or disown) me thrice, (Mark, xiv. 30.) Here we see the nature, the time, and the repetitions of Peter's offence precisely defined and limited. And I take the suddenness and sincerity of his return to his former faith in his master, implied in his weeping bitterly upon the recollection of his crime, and of his master's words, to be fore-signified in this passage of Saint Luke, (xxii. 31, 32,) "And the Lord said, Simon, Simon, behold Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat; but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not, and when thou

* See Grotius, in loc.

art converted, (ἐπιστρέψας, returned back again to the faith,) strengthen thy brethren."

4. The fourth event foretold by Christ, is his being delivered to the high priests, and by them to Pontius Pilate the Roman governor, together with many particulars of his sufferings, from that time to his crucifixion. All which things are related by the evangelists, as follows:

Matt. xxvi. 57; Mark, xiv. 53. "And they that had laid hold on Jesus led him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled;" who, after having examined some witnesses, from whose evidence nothing criminal could be made out against him, at length "adjured him by the living God to tell them, whether he was the Christ the Son of God." To him Jesus saith, "Thou hast said. Then the high priest rent his clothes, saying, He hath spoken blasphemy, what farther need have we of witnesses? Behold now you have heard his blasphemy: What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death. Then did they spit in his face and buffeted him, and others smote him with the palms of their hands, saying, Prophesy to us, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee?"

Matt. xxvii. 2. "And when they had bound him, they led him away to Pontius Pilate the (Roman) governor;" who, overcome by the clamours of a tumultuous multitude, at last delivered him to be crucified, after having declared him innocent five several times, and endeavoured in vain to prevail upon the Jews to let him go free, or to be contented with his having scourged him. Ver. 27. "Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered to him the whole band of soldiers; and they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe; and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand. And they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail king of the Jews. And they spit upon him, and took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him."

The words, in which many of these particulars were foretold, are these:—"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him," (Matt. xx. 18.) In Saint Mark, (x. 34,) it is, "They," the Gentiles, "shall mock him, and shall scourge him, and shall spit upon him, and shall kill him." In Saint Luke, (xviii. 32,) "For he shall be delivered to the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spit on, and they shall scourge him, and put him to death." Of his sufferings from the elders and chief priests he spoke in these words:—"From that time forth began Jesus to shew to his disciples how he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders, and chief priests, and scribes, and be killed," &c. (Matt. xvi. 21.)

5. His crucifixion and death are mentioned in every one of the last-cited passages, and in many others up and down the evangelists, either in express words, or in figures and allusions, which I think it is not necessary to insert, no more than the relation of those events, which are too well known to be disputed.

One proof, however, of his death I shall here beg leave to mention, because it has not been much attended to by common readers. Saint John, (xix. 33, 34,) after having related that the soldiers brake the legs of the two thieves, who were crucified with Jesus, adds, "But when they came to Jesus, and saw that he was dead already, they brake not his legs, but one of the soldiers with a spear pierced his side, and forthwith came thereout blood and water; and he that saw it bare record," &c. Upon these words Beza makes the following observation:—"Among the reasons that induced Saint John to assert this fact with so much emphasis, this ought not to be passed over, which Erasmus also touches upon; namely, that by this wound the death of Christ is fully proved. For the water flowing out of that wound in the side, was an indication of the spear's having penetrated the pericardium, in which that water is lodged, and which being wounded, every animal must necessarily die immediately. This fact therefore was inserted to obviate the calumnies of the enemies of the truth, who might otherwise pretend that Jesus was taken down from the cross before he was dead, and thence call in question the reality of his resurrection from the dead."

6. Of his rising from the dead I need not here again produce the proofs, having set them forth so copiously in all the preceding parts of this discourse; but concerning the evidence of his rising precisely on "the third day," I think it proper here to add an observation or two. That he did not rise before the third day is evident, from what Saint Matthew relates of the watch or guard being set at the door of the sepulchre. The passage is this: (xxvii. 62—64,) "Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the chief priests and pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, whilst he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again: Command, therefore, that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say to the people, he is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first," &c. From these words I observe, 1*st*, That the watch or guard was set at the sepulchre the next day

after the death and burial of Christ. *2dly*, It is most probable this was done on what we call the evening of that day; because that was a "high-day," not only a Sabbath, but the Passover; and it can hardly be imagined that the chief priests, and especially the pharisees, who pretended to greater strictness and purity than any other sect of the Jews, should, before the religious duties of the day were over, defile themselves by going to Pilate; for that they were scrupulous upon that point appears from what Saint John (xviii. 28) says of their not entering into the hall of judgment (the prætorium, where Pilate's tribunal was) the day before, "lest they should be defiled," and so kept from eating the Passover. And if it should be said, that the Paschal Lamb being always eaten in the night, all their scruples upon that account were over, and they at liberty to go to Pilate in the morning, or at what other time they pleased; I answer, that allowing the objection, it is still farther to be considered, that this was the Sabbath day; and can it be supposed that the pharisees, who censured Jesus for healing, and his disciples for plucking and eating the ears of corn on the Sabbath day, would profane that day, and defile themselves, not only by going to Pilate, but with the soldiers to the sepulchre of Christ, and setting a seal upon the door of the sepulchre, before the religious duties of that solemn day were past? especially as they were under no kind of necessity of doing it before the evening; though it was highly expedient for them not to delay it beyond that time. Both which points I shall now explain.

Jesus had said, whilst he was yet alive, that he should rise again from the dead on the third day; which prophecy would have been equally falsified by his rising on the first, or second, as on the fourth. If his body therefore was not in the sepulchre at the close of the second day, the chief priests and pharisees would gain their point, and might have asserted boldly, that he was an impostor; from whence it will follow, that it was time enough for them to visit the sepulchre at the close of the second day. On the other hand, as he had declared he should rise on the "third day," it was necessary for them, (if they apprehended what they gave out, that his disciples would come and steal him away,) to guard against any such attempt on that day, and for that day only. And, as the third day began from the evening or shutting in of the second, according to the way of computing used among the Jews, it was as necessary for them not to delay visiting the sepulchre, and setting their guard, till after the beginning of that third day; for if they had come to the sepulchre, though ever so short a time after the third day was begun, and had found the body missing, they could not from thence have proved him an impostor. And accordingly, Saint Matthew tells us, they went thither on the second day, which was the Sabbath; and though the going to Pilate, and, with the Roman soldiers, to the sepulchre, and sealing up the stone, was undoubtedly a profanation of the Sabbath, in the eyes of the ceremonious pharisees, yet might they excuse themselves to their consciences, or (what seems to have been of greater consequence in their opinions) to the world, by pleading the necessity of doing it that day. And surely nothing could have carried them out on such a business, on such a day, but the urgent necessity of doing it then, or not at all. And as I have shewn above, that this urgent necessity could not take place till the close of the second day, and just, though but one moment, before the beginning of the third; it will follow, from what hath been said, that in the estimation of the high priests and pharisees, the day on which they set their guard was the second day; and the next day consequently was the third; to the end of which they requested Pilate to command that the sepulchre might be made sure. Here then we have a proof, furnished by the murderers and blasphemers of Christ themselves, that he was not risen before the third day; for it is to be taken for granted, that before they sealed up the sepulchre, and set the guard, they had inspected it, and seen that the body was still there. Hence also are we enabled to answer the unlearned cavils that have been raised upon these expressions, "three days and three nights," and "after three days." For it is plain that the chief priests and pharisees, by their going to the sepulchre on the Sabbath day, understood that day to be the second; and it is as plain by their setting the guard from that time, and the reason given to Pilate for their so doing, namely, "lest the disciples should come in the night and steal him away," that they construed that day, which was just then beginning, to be the day limited by Christ for his rising from the dead, that is the third day. For had they taken these words of our Saviour, "The Son of Man shall be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," in their strict literal sense, they need not have been in such haste to set their guard; since, according to that interpretation, there were yet two days and two nights to come; neither, for the same reason, had they any occasion to apprehend ill consequences from the disciples coming that night and stealing away the body of their master. So that, unless it be supposed that the chief priests and pharisees, the most learned sect among the Jews, did not understand the meaning of a phrase in their own language; or that they were so impious and impolitic as to profane the Sabbath and defile themselves without any occasion; and so senseless and impertinent as to ask a guard of Pilate for watching the sepulchre "that night

and day," to prevent the disciples stealing away the body of Christ the night or the day following; unless, I say, these strange suppositions be admitted, we may fairly conclude that, in the language, and to the understanding of the Jews, "three days and three nights," and "after three days," were equivalent to "three days," or "in three days." That he rose on the third day, the testimony of the angels, and his own appearances to the women, to Simon, and to the two disciples on the way to Emmaus, which all happened on that day, are clear and sufficient proofs.

The predictions of Christ, relating to this miraculous event, are many; some of which only I shall here set down, for brevity's sake.

"And as they (the three disciples) came down from the mountain (where Christ had been transfigured) Jesus charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of man be risen again from the dead," Matthew, xvii. 9.

"But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee," xxvi. 32.

"From that time forth, began Jesus to shew to his disciples, how that he must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day," xvi. 21.

"Behold, we go up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man shall be betrayed to the chief priests, and to the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles, to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify him, and the third day he shall rise again," Matt. xx. 18, 19.

I shall defer what remarks I have to make upon these predictions, and their accomplishment, till I come to consider the prophecies contained in the writings of Moses, and the Prophets, and the Psalms, relating to the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Christ; for those only belong to the present subject

Sect. XVIII. — *4thly*, The fourth evidence appealed to by our Saviour, was the testimony of the Scriptures; in which are contained, not only the promises of a Messiah, and Saviour of the world, but the marks and descriptions by which he was to be known. Of these there are so many, and those so various, so seemingly incompatible in one and the same person, and exhibited under such a multitude of types and figures, that as it was absurd for a mere mortal to pretend to answer the character of the Messiah in all points, so was it difficult to those who, by some expressions of the prophets, were filled with the idea of a glorious, powerful, and triumphant deliverer, to understand the intimation given in others of his sufferings and death. But this difficulty proceeds rather from the prejudices and blindness of the interpreters, than from any degree of obscurity in the latter more than in the former. His sufferings and death, and his offering himself up as a sacrifice for sin, are as plainly set forth in the writings of the prophets, and in the types of the Mosaical ceremonies, as his power and his priesthood: And if the Jews, and even the disciples, possessed with the like vain and carnal imaginations, turned their views and expectations to the one, and overlooked the other, it was owing to their mistaking the nature of his kingdom, and the end and design of his priestly office. This, I doubt not, might be made appear by comparing the several types and prophecies together, but would carry me too far from my present purpose, which is only to shew, that the sufferings, and death, and resurrection of Christ, were foretold in the types and predictions contained in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; and to derive from thence another proof in favour of the resurrection.

The first prophecy relating to this subject in the books of Moses, and the first indeed that was ever given to man, is that recorded in the third chapter of Genesis, and the 15th verse, in these words, "And I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed. It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel."

Upon this prophecy, I shall beg leave to quote a passage out of the Bishop of Salisbury's most admirable discourses, "Of the Use and Intent of Prophecy in the several Ages of the World," Dis. III. p. 57. "Let us consider the history of Moses, as we should do any other ancient eastern history of the like antiquity: suppose, for instance, that this account of the fall had been preserved to us out of Sanchoniatho's Phœnician history; we should in that case be at a loss perhaps to account for every manner of representation, for every figure and expression in the story; but we should soon agree that all these difficulties were imputable to the manner and customs of his age and country; and should shew more respect to so venerable a piece of antiquity, than to charge it with want of sense, because we did not understand every minute circumstance; we should likewise agree that there were evidently four persons concerned in the story; the man, the woman, the person represented by the serpent, and God. Disagree we could not about their several parts. The serpent is evidently the tempter; the man and the woman are the offenders; God the Judge of all three. The punishments inflicted on the man and woman have no obscurity in them; and as to the serpent's sentence, we should think it reasonable to give it such a sense as the whole series of the story requires.

"It is no unreasonable thing, surely, to demand the same equity of you in interpreting the sense of Moses, as you would certainly use towards any other ancient writer. And if the same equity be allowed, this plain fact undeniably arises from the history,—that man was tempted to disobedience, and did disobey, and forfeited all title to happiness, and to life itself; that God judged him and the deceiver likewise under the form of a serpent. We require no more; and will proceed upon this fact to consider the prophecy before us.

"The prophecy is part of the sentence passed upon the deceiver; the words are these, 'I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed: It shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel,' Gen. iii. 15. Christian writers apply this to our blessed Saviour, emphatically styled here the seed of the woman, and who came in the fulness of time to bruise the serpent's head, by destroying the works of the devil, and restoring those to the liberty of the sons of God, who were held under the bondage and captivity of sin. You will say, What unreasonable liberty of interpretation is this! Tell us by what rules of language the seed of the woman is made to denote one particular person, and by what art you discover the mystery of Christ's miraculous conception and birth in this common expression? Tell us likewise, how bruising the serpent's head comes to signify the destroying the power of sin, and the redemption of mankind by Christ? It is no wonder to hear such questions, from those who look no farther than to the third chapter of Genesis, to see the ground of the Christian application. As the prophecy stands there, nothing appears to point out this particular meaning; much less to confine this prophecy to it. But of this hereafter. Let us for the present lay aside all our own notions, and go back to the state and condition of things, as they were at the time of the delivery of this prophecy; and see (if haply we may discover it) what God intended to discover at that time by this prophecy, and what we may reasonably suppose our first parents understood it to mean.

"They were now in a state of sin, standing before God to receive sentence for their disobedience, and had reason to expect a full execution of the penalty threatened, 'In the day thou eatest thereof, thou shalt surely die.' But God came in mercy as well as judgment, purposing not only to punish, but to restore man. The judgment is awful and severe: the woman is doomed to sorrow in conception; the man to sorrow and travail all the days of his life; the ground is cursed for his sake; and the end of the judgment is, 'Dust thou art, and to dust thou shalt return.' Had they been left thus, they might have continued in their labour and sorrow for their appointed time, and at last returned to dust, without any well-grounded hope or confidence in God; they must have looked upon themselves as rejected by their Maker, delivered up to trouble and sorrow in this world, and as having no hope in any other. Upon this foot, I conceive there could have been no religion left in the world; for a sense of religion, without hope, is a state of frenzy and distraction, void of all inducements to love and obedience, or any thing else that is praiseworthy. If, therefore, God intended to preserve them as objects of mercy, it was absolutely necessary to communicate so much hope to them, as might be a rational foundation for their future endeavours to reconcile themselves to him by a better obedience. This seems to be the primary intention of this first divine prophecy; and it was necessary to the state of the world, and the condition of religion, which could not possibly have been supported without the communication of such hopes. The prophecy is excellently adapted to this purpose, and manifestly conveyed such hopes to our first parents. For, let us consider in what sense we may suppose them to understand this prophecy. Now, they must necessarily understand the prophecy, either according to the literal meaning of the words, or according to such meaning as the whole circumstances of the transaction, of which they are a part, do require. If we suppose them to understand the words literally, and that God meant them so to be understood, this passage must appear ridiculous. Do but imagine that you see God coming to judge the offenders; Adam and Eve before him in the utmost distress; that you hear God inflicting pains, and sorrow, and misery, and death upon the first of human race; and that, in the midst of all this scene of wo and great calamity, you hear God foretelling, with great solemnity, a very trivial accident, that should sometimes happen in the world,—that serpents would be apt to bite men by the heels, and that men would be apt to revenge themselves by striking them on the head. What has this trifle to do with the loss of mankind, with the corruption of the natural and moral world, and the ruin of all the glory and happiness of the creation? Great comfort it was to Adam, doubtless, after telling him that his days should be short and full of misery, and his end without hope, to let him know that he should now and then knock a snake on the head, but not even that, without paying dear for his poor victory, for the snake should often bite him by the heel. Adam, surely, could not understand the prophecy in this sense, though some of his sons have so understood it,—a plain indication how much more some men are concerned to maintain a literal interpretation of Scripture, than they are to

make it speak common sense. Leaving this, therefore, as absolutely absurd and ridiculous, let us consider what meaning the circumstances of the transaction do necessarily fix to the words of this prophecy. Adam, tempted by his wife, and she by the serpent, had fallen from their obedience, and were now in the presence of God expecting judgment. They knew full well at this juncture, that their fall was the victory of the serpent, whom by experience they found to be an enemy to God and to man; to man, whom he had ruined by seducing him to sin; to God, the noblest work of whose creation he had defaced. It could not therefore but be some comfort to them to hear the serpent first condemned, and to see that, however he had prevailed against them, he had gained no victory over their Maker, who was able to assert his own honour, and to punish this great author of iniquity. By this method of God's proceeding they were secured from thinking that there was any evil being equal to the Creator in power and dominion,—an opinion which gained ground in after times through the prevalency of evil, and is, where it does prevail, destructive of all true religion. The condemnation therefore of the serpent was the maintenance of God's supremacy; and that it was so understood, we have, if I mistake not, a very ancient testimony in the book of Job: 'With God is strength and wisdom, the deceived and the deceiver are his;' that is, equally subject to his command, Job, xii. 16. The belief of God's supreme dominion, which is the foundation of all religion, being thus preserved, it was still necessary to give them such hopes as might make them capable of religion toward God. These hopes they could not but conceive, when they heard from the mouth of God that the serpent's victory was not a complete victory over even themselves; that they and their posterity should be enabled to contest his empire; and though they were to suffer much in the struggle, yet finally they should prevail and bruise the serpent's head, and deliver themselves from his power and dominion over them. What now could they conceive this conquest over the serpent to mean? Is it not natural to expect that we shall recover that by victory, which we lost by being defeated? They knew that the enemy had subdued them by sin: could they then conceive hopes of victory otherwise than by righteousness? They lost through sin the happiness of their creation: could they expect less from the return of righteousness than the recovery of the blessings forfeited? What else but this could they expect? For the certain knowledge they had of their loss when the serpent prevailed, could not but lead them to a clear knowledge of what they should regain by prevailing against the serpent. The language of this prophecy is indeed in part metaphorical, but it is a great mistake to think that all metaphors are of uncertain signification; for the design and scope of the speaker, with the circumstances attending, create a fixed and determinate sense. Were it otherwise, there would be no certainty in any language; all languages, the Eastern more especially, abounding in metaphors.

"Let us now look back to our subject, and see what application we are to make of this instance.

"This prophecy was to our first parents but very obscure; it was, in the phrase of Saint Peter, but 'a light shining in a dark place;' all that they could certainly conclude from it was, that their case was not desperate; that some deliverance from the evil they were under, would in time appear; but when, or where, or by what means, they could not understand: Their own sentence, which returned them back again to the dust of the earth, made it difficult to apprehend what this victory over the serpent should signify, or how they, who were shortly to be dust and ashes, should be the better for it. But after all that can be urged upon this head to set out the obscurity of this promise, I should ask one question: Was not this promise or prophecy, though surrounded with all this obscurity, a foundation for religion, and trust and confidence towards God after the fall, in hopes of deliverance from the evils introduced by disobedience? If it was, it fully answered the necessity of their case, to whom it was given, and manifested to them all that God intended to make manifest. They could have had towards God no religion, without some foundation of mercy: it was necessary therefore to convey such hopes; but to tell them how these hopes should be accomplished, at what time and manner precisely, was not necessary to their religion. And what is now to be objected against this prophecy? It is very obscure, you say; so it is; but it is obscure in the points which God did not intend to explain at that time, and which were not necessary then to be known. You see a plain reason for giving this prophecy, and, as far as the reason for giving the prophecy extends, so far the prophecy is very plain: it is obscure only where there is no reason why it should be plain; which surely is a fault easily to be forgiven, and very far from being a proper subject for complaint.

"But if this prophecy conveyed to our first parents only a general hope and expectation of pardon and restoration, and was intended by God to convey no more to them, how came we, their posterity, to find so much more in this promise than we suppose them to find? How is it that we pretend to discover Christ in this prophecy, to see in it the mystery of his birth, his sufferings, and his final triumph over all the powers of darkness? By what

new light do we discern all these secrets? By what art do we unfold them?

"It is no wonder to me, that such as come to the examination of the prophecies applied to Christ, expecting to find in each of them some express character and mark of Christ, plainly to be understood as such antecedently to his coming, should ask these, or many other the like questions; or that the argument from ancient prophecy should appear so light and trivial to those who know no better use of it.

"Known unto God are all his works from the beginning; and whatever degree of light he thought fit to communicate to our first parents, or to their children in after times, there is no doubt but that he had a perfect knowledge at all times of all the methods by which he intended to rescue and restore mankind; and therefore all the notices given by him to mankind of his intended salvation, must correspond to the great event whenever the fulness of time shall make it manifest. No reason can be given why God should at all times, or at any time, clearly open the secrets of his providence to men; it depends merely upon his good pleasure to do it in what time and in what manner he thinks proper. But there is a necessary reason to be given why all such notices as God thinks fit to give, should answer exactly in due time to the completion of the great design: it is absurd therefore to complain of the ancient prophecies for being obscure; for it is challenging God for not telling us more of his secrets. But if we pretend that God has at length manifested to us, by the revelation of the gospel, the method of his salvation, it is necessary for us to shew that all the notices of this salvation given to the old world do correspond to the things which we have seen and heard with our eyes. The argument from prophecy therefore is not to be formed in this manner, All the ancient prophecies have expressly pointed out and characterized Christ Jesus: But it must be formed in this manner, All the notices which God gave to the fathers of his intended salvation are perfectly answered by the coming of Christ. He never promised or engaged his word in any particular relating to the common salvation, but what he has fully made good by sending his Son to our redemption. Let us try these methods upon the prophecy before us. If you demand that we should shew you *à priori* Christ Jesus set forth in this prophecy, and that God had limited himself by this promise to convey the blessing intended by sending his own Son in the flesh, and by no other means whatever, you demand what I cannot shew, nor do I know who can. But if you inquire whether this prophecy, in the obvious and most natural meaning of it, in that sense in which our first parents and their children after, might easily understand it, has been verified by the coming of Christ, I conceive it may be made as clear as the sun at noon-day, that all the expectation raised by this prophecy, has been completely answered by the redemption wrought by Christ Jesus. And what have you to desire more than to see a prophecy fulfilled exactly? If you insist that the prophecy should have been more express, you must demand of God why he gave you no more light; but you ought at least to suspend this demand till you have a reason to shew for it.

"I know that this prophecy is urged farther, and that Christian writers argue from the expressions of it to shew that Christ is therein particularly foretold. He properly is the seed of a woman in a sense in which no other ever was; his sufferings were well prefigured by the bruising of the heel; his complete victory over sin and death by bruising the serpent's head. When unbelievers hear such reasonings, they think themselves entitled to laugh; but their scorn be to themselves. We readily allow that the expressions do not imply necessarily this sense; we allow farther, that there is no appearance that our first parents understood them in this sense, or that God intended they should so understand them: but since this prophecy has been plainly fulfilled in Christ, and by the event appropriated to him only, I would fain know how it comes to be conceived to be so ridiculous a thing in us, to suppose that God, to whom the whole event was known from the beginning,* should make choice of such expressions as naturally conveyed so much knowledge as he intended to convey to our first parents, and yet should appear in the fulness of time to have been peculiarly adapted to the event, which he from the beginning saw, and which he intended the world should one day see; and which, when they should see, they might the more easily acknowledge to be the work of his hand, by the secret evidence which he had enclosed from the days of old in the words of prophecy. However the wit of man may despise this method, yet is there nothing in it unbecoming the wisdom of God. And when we see this to be the case, not only in this instance, but in many other prophecies of the Old Testament, it is not without reason we conclude, that under the obscurity of ancient prophecy there was an evidence of God's truth kept in reserve, to be made manifest in due time."

The exquisite and masterly sense, clearness, and force of reason, which is so conspicuous in this passage, that every common reader

* "Remember the former things of old; for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me: declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure," Isa. xlvi. 9, 10. "The works of the Lord are done in judgment from the beginning; and from the time he made them, he disposed the parts thereof," Eccl'us. xvi.26.

must perceive, and every judicious one admire it, and the pertinency of it to the present subject, will, I doubt not, sufficiently atone for the length of the quotation.

In all the books of Moses I find no other prophecy but this, relating to the death and sufferings of Christ; I shall, therefore, according to the method pointed out in the words of our Saviour, proceed in the next place to the prophets; and first produce one out of Isaiah, whose application to the Messiah the most obstinate enemies of the gospel have not been able to deny.

Isa. liii. "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness, and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him. He is despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and we hid, as it were, our faces from him: he was despised, and we esteemed him not. Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted. But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him, and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray: we have turned every one to his own way, and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment:* and who shall declare his generation? for he was cut off out of the land of the living; for the transgression of my people was he stricken. And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death; because he had done no violence, neither was any deceit in his mouth. Yet it pleased the Lord to bruise him; he hath put him to grief: when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin, he shall see his seed, he shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper in his hand. He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities. Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great, and he shall divide the spoil with the strong; because he hath poured out his soul unto death: and he was numbered with the transgressors; and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors."

It is impossible for any one, who is the least acquainted with the history of Christ, not to perceive many circumstances of his life, his sufferings, and his death, plainly pointed at in this prophecy; and, indeed, so apparently and so completely was it fulfilled in Christ, that the later rabbins, to avoid the conclusions which the Christians might draw from this and other prophecies in favour of the gospel, have invented a distinction of a double Messias; "one who was to redeem us, and another who was to suffer for us; for they say, that there are two several persons promised under the name of the Messias,—one of the tribe of Ephraim, the other of the tribe of Judah; one the son of Joseph, the other the son of David; the one to precede, fight, and suffer death—the other to follow, conquer, reign, and never to die."* But Bishop Pearson, from whom I have borrowed this remark, has clearly shewed this distinction to be not only false in itself, but advantageous to the Christian faith, as admitting a suffering Messias to be foretold by the prophets; and has also proved,† that the ancient rabbins did understand this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah to be a description of the Messias, without any intimation of a double Messias,—an invention introduced by the modern Jews to favour their vain expectations of a temporal prince and deliverer.

For what is farther to be collected out of the other prophecies, and especially the Psalms, relating to this subject, I cannot do better than to give it to the reader in the words of the same Bishop Pearson, whose observations upon the several articles concerning the sufferings, &c. of Jesus, I would wish him to consider.‡

"All which (the predictions of his sufferings, and particularly this fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, compared with his life) if we look upon in the gross, we must acknowledge it fulfilled in him (Jesus) to the highest degree imaginable, 'that he was a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief.' But if we compare the particular predictions with the historical passages of his sufferings, if we join the prophets and evangelists together, it will most manifestly appear the Messias was to suffer nothing which Christ hath not suffered. If Zechariah say, (xi. 12,) 'They weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver;' Saint Matthew will shew (xxvi. 15,) that Judas sold Jesus at the same rate; for the chief priests 'covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.' If Isaiah say, (liii. 5,) 'that he was wounded;' if Zechariah, (xii. 10,) 'they shall look upon me whom they have pierced;' if the prophet David yet more particularly, 'they pierced my hands and my feet,' (Psal. xxii. 16,) the evangelist will shew how he was fastened to the cross, and Jesus himself 'the print of the nails,' (John, xx. 27.) If the Psalmist tell us, they should 'laugh him

* The margin of the Bible has it, "He was taken away by distress and judgment."

* Pearson on the Creed, p. 185. † Ibid. p. 57. ‡ Ibid. p. 88.

to scorn, and shake their head, saying, He trusted in the Lord that he would deliver him; let him deliver him, seeing he delighted in him,' (Psalm xxii. 7, 8;) Saint Matthew will describe the same action, and the same expression; for, 'they that passed by reviled him, wagging their heads, and saying, He trusted in God, let him deliver him now, if he will have him; for he said, I am the Son of God,' (Matt. xxvii. 39, 43.) Let David say, (Psal. xxii. 1,) 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' and the Son of David will shew in whose person the Father spoke it, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabacthani?' (Matt. xxvii. 46.) Let Isaiah foretell, (liii. 12,) 'He was numbered with the transgressors,' and you shall find him 'crucified between two thieves, one on his right hand, the other on his left, (Mark, xv. 27.) Read in the Psalmist, (lxix. 21,) 'In my thirst they gave me vinegar to drink;' and you shall find in the evangelist, 'Jesus, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, I thirst: and they took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink,' (John, xix. 28; Matt. xxvii. 48.) Read farther yet, 'They part my garments among them, and cast lots upon my vesture,' (Psalm xxii. 18;) and to fulfill the prediction, the soldiers shall make good the distinction, 'who took his garments, and made four parts, to every soldier a part, and also his coat: Now the coat was without seam, woven from the top throughout. They said therefore among themselves, Let us not rend it, but cast lots for it, whose it shall be,' (John, xix. 23, 24.) Lastly, let the prophet teach us, 'that he shall be brought like a lamb to the slaughter, and be cut off out of the land of the living,' (Isaiah, liii. 7, 8;) all the evangelists will declare how like a lamb he suffered, and the very Jews will acknowledge that he was cut off."

These instances, I imagine, are sufficient to shew, that according to the prophets, "thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to die." That his burial also, and his resurrection, were in like manner foretold, will appear by the following passages.

Isaiah, in the above-quoted chapter, (liii. 9,) speaks of his burial in these words, "And he made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death," the circumstantial accomplishment of which is too remarkable not to be taken notice of.

* The power of life and death had been taken from the Jews and lodged in the hands of the Roman governor, from the time that Augustus annexed Judea to the province of Syria; which was done some years after the birth of Christ. The chief priests, therefore, and rulers of the Jews, were obliged to apply to Pontius Pilate, not only to put Jesus to death, but for leave to take down his body and those of the two malefactors executed with him, "that they might not remain upon the cross on the Sabbath-day." For among the Romans, (with whom crucifixion was the usual capital punishment for slaves, robbers, &c. under the degree of Roman citizens,) it was customary to let the carcass hang on the cross till it was either consumed by time, or devoured by birds and beasts. Upon a petition, however, of the executed person's friends or relations, leave to bury them was seldom or never refused; and hence Pilate without any difficulty yielded to the application of the Jews for taking down the bodies, and gave permission to Joseph of Arimathea to bury that of Jesus. What became of the bodies of the two thieves after they were taken down from the cross is not mentioned by any of the evangelists. That they were buried is almost certain; because not only the custom of the Jews, but the express words of Moses required, "If a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day, that thy land be not defiled," (Deut. xxi. 22, 23.) Which precept was doubtless the reason of their petitioning Pilate to have the bodies taken from the cross that day, enforced by the additional consideration of the particular solemnity and sanctity of the paschal Sabbath then immediately ensuing. And that they were buried in or near the place of crucifixion is, I think, most probable for the following reasons: — First, The place where they were executed was called Golgotha, that is, "a place of a skull," (Matt. xxvii. 33,) a name in all likelihood derived to it from the number of skulls, which, (if it was the usual place of execution, as from this instance it is most reasonable to conclude it was,) might frequently have been found there, either fallen from bodies left to putrefy on the cross, or turned up by the opening the ground for such malefactors as the governor permitted to be buried. Secondly The Paschal Sabbath * was drawing on apace For as among the Jews the day was always reckoned to commence from the evening, so, for the greater caution, were they accustomed to begin the sabbatical rest from all kind of work an hour before sunset; but on this day which was the preparation of the passover, the holy hours (if I may so speak) began still earlier; because the paschal lambs † were always slain between the ninth and eleventh hours, within which space of time the whole multitude of Jews repaired to the temple, ‡ where alone the passover was killed, and having there offered the blood and entrails of the paschal victims, they brought back the remaining carcass to dress and eat it at their

* See Pearson on the Creed, Article 4.

* Grotius, ad ver. Matt. xxvii. 58. † Ibid. Matt. xxvi. 2.
‡ Lamy Dissert. de Pasch.

own homes, according to the Mosaical institution. The Jews could not then but be much pressed in time, for the ninth hour was begun before our Saviour expired, and the soldiers coming after that time to the two malefactors found them not yet dead; and therefore by a cruel kind of mercy, to put an end to a painful life, and to despatch them the more speedily, broke their legs, the *coup de grace* obtained for those miserable wretches of the Roman governor by the Jews, and intended likewise for him, who, though innocent, and delivered up by their malice to that infamous and horrid death, yet, with a benevolence and generosity unparalleled, interceded for them even upon the cross, in these compassionate terms, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do!" (Luke, xxiii. 34.) Now as Jesus, and consequently the two thieves, did not expire till after the ninth hour; as the Jews were obliged to repair to the temple before the eleventh hour, at the expiration of which the sabbatical rest from all kinds of work began; and as they were solicitous that the bodies should be taken down and buried before the commencement of that high and solemn day; it is most likely they buried them at or near the place where they were crucified; because they had not time to carry them to any great distance; because Golgotha, from its name, seems to have been a place of burial for those who had been executed there; and because the want of time is the very reason given in the evangelist for laying the body of Jesus in the sepulchre of Joseph of Arimathea, which was near adjoining, as Saint John tells us in these words, (xix. 41, 42;) "Now, in the place where he was crucified there was a garden, and in this garden a new sepulchre, wherein was never man yet laid. There laid they Jesus, therefore, because of the Jews' preparation, for the sepulchre was nigh at hand." Here then we may see and admire the exact completion of this famous prophecy of Isaiah, "He made his grave with the wicked, and with the rich in his death." He was buried, like the wicked companions of his death, under the general leave granted to the Jews for taking down their bodies from the cross; and was like them buried in or near the place of execution. But here the distinction foreseen and foretold many hundred years before, took place in favour of Jesus, who, though "numbered with the transgressors, had done no violence, neither was there any deceit in his mouth:" for Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and an honourable counsellor, (Mark, xv. 43,) and Nicodemus, (John, xix. 38–40,) a man of the pharisees, a ruler of the Jews, a master of Israel, conspired to make his grave with the rich, by wrapping his body in linen clothes, with a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about an hundred pound weight, and laying it in a new sepulchre, hewed or hollowed into a rock, which Joseph of Arimathea had caused to be made for his own use; circumstances which evidently shew, that he was not only buried by the rich, but like the rich also, according to the prophecy.

The words of David (Psalm xvi. 8, &c.) foretelling the resurrection of Christ, together with Saint Peter's comment upon them, I shall insert entire as they stand in the second chapter of the Acts, the 25th and following verses.

"For David speaketh concerning him, I foresaw the Lord always before my face; for he is on my right hand, that I should not be moved: therefore did my heart rejoice, and my tongue was glad; moreover also, my flesh shall rest in hope: because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance. Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his sepulchre is with us unto this day. Therefore being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, he would raise up Christ to sit on his throne; he, seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption."

The apostle's reasoning was very well understood by the Jews, and so convincing, that (Acts, ii. 41.) "three thousand souls were that day added" to the church, and baptized into the faith of Christ. His argument stands thus: You acknowledge David to be a prophet, who, under his own person, often spake of the Messiah. To the Messiah therefore belong these words, "Thou shalt not leave my soul [life] in hell [hades, the grave;] neither shalt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption;"* because they are by no means applicable to David, who it is not pretended ever rose from the dead: on the contrary, he was buried, and his body remained and putrefied in his sepulchre, "which is with us even to this day." But by divine illumination he foresaw that the Messiah, or Christ, who "according to the flesh" was to descend from him, should be raised up from the dead to "sit upon his throne," that is, to reign like him over the people of God; and therefore he foretold the resurrection of Christ in words most exactly fulfilled in Jesus, who rose alive out of the grave in so short a time after his death, that he "saw no corruption," whereof, adds he, "we are witnesses."

Concerning these words no other question can be raised, than whether they relate to the Messiah; for to David most certainly they can never be applied. If they relate to the Messiah,

* See Whitby on this passage.

then was Jesus the Messiah; for in his resurrection were they accomplished; and doubtless the three thousand Jews, who were converted by the preaching of Peter, acknowledged both the one and the other of these propositions. And indeed, by the manner in which these words of the Psalmist were urged by Saint Peter, and afterwards by Saint Paul, (Acts, xiii. 35,) it seems to have been by them taken for granted, that as they were not applicable to David, they must be understood of the Messiah, whom therefore, according to Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, it behoved to suffer, to die, to be buried, and to rise again from the dead, as the several passages above-cited clearly shew.

Besides the express word of prophecy, there were several predictions of another kind, of the sufferings, death, and resurrection of Christ, held forth in types and figures; such as those two mentioned by our Saviour, and applied to himself: "As Moses," says he, "lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up," John, iii. 14; Numb. xxi. 9. And again, "As Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth," Matt. xii. 40; Jonah, i. 17, and ii. 10. The paschal lamb,* alluded to by Saint Paul in these words, "Christ our passover is slain," 1 Cor. v. 7; the waved sheaf, alluded to in like manner by the same apostle, 1 Cor. xv. 20, 23. Rom. xi. 16. and many others. I shall not here inquire how far, and in what cases, an argument from types and figures may be admitted, but shall content myself with quoting a passage relating to this point out of the incomparable Discourses of Bishop Sherlock upon Prophecy, as follows:

"Another question, proper to be considered with respect to the state of religion under the Jewish dispensation, is this, How far the religion of the Jews was preparatory to that new dispensation, which was in due time to be revealed, in accomplishment of the promise made to all nations. Now, if Abraham and his posterity were chosen, not merely for their own sakes, or out of any partial views and regards towards them, but to be the instruments in the hand of God for bringing about his great designs in the world; if the temporal government was given for the sake of the everlasting covenant, and to be subservient to the introduction of it, it is highly probable, that all the parts of the Jewish dispensation were adapted to serve the same end; and that the law founded on the temporal covenant was intended, as the temporal covenant itself was, to prepare the way to better promises. If this, upon the whole, appears to be a reasonable supposition, then have we a foundation to inquire into the meaning of the law, not merely as it is a literal command to the Jews, but as containing the figure and image of good things to come. It can hardly be supposed that God, intending finally to save the world by Christ and the preaching of the gospel, should give an intermediate law, which had no respect nor relation to the covenant, which he intended to establish for ever. And whoever will be at the pains to consider seriously the whole administration of Providence together, from the beginning to the end, may see perhaps more reason than he imagines, to allow of types and figures in the Jewish law.

"To proceed then: The Jewish dispensation, not conveying to all nations the blessing promised through Abraham's seed, but being only the administration of the hopes and expectation created by the promise of God; in this respect it stood entirely upon the word of prophecy; for future hopes and expectations from God can have no other real foundation. Inasmuch then as the Jewish religion did virtually contain the hopes of the gospel, the religion itself was a prophecy," &c.

That the Jewish Rabbins, and the fathers of the Christian Church, as well as our Saviour and his apostles, understood many things in the law of Moses, in the historical books of the Old Testament, in the Prophets and the Psalms, to be types and shadows of things to come, is very certain; and if the two former carried their conceits upon this head farther than reason or sense could allow them to do, types and figures are not upon that pretence to be wholly rejected; especially as many precepts and ceremonies in the Mosaic institution may very well be accounted for, by supposing them intended as images and shadows of things to come; and can but ill be reconciled to the wisdom of the lawgiver without such a solution. And if such types be once admitted, it will be no difficult matter to shew that they were fulfilled in Christ Jesus, as the great antitype to which they all referred.

Sect. XIX.—Whoever takes an attentive view of the predictions relating to the Messiah,† contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, will perceive the great scheme of Providence in the deliverance of mankind from the power of sin and death, opening by degrees, in a succession of prophecies through the several ages of the world; each of which, in proportion as the accomplishment of the wonderful and gracious purpose of God advanced, grew more explicit and particular; till they came at last to point at the very times and person of the expected deliverer. Thus the promise of redemption to mankind, which was given to our first parents in very general and obscure words,

* See Lamy's Diss. de Pasch. and Pearson upon the Creed.

† See Bp. Sherlock's Discourses on the Use and Intent of Prophecy

"The seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head," Gen. iii. 15, importing, that some of their descendants should vanquish their great enemy, was renewed to Abraham in clearer terms, and limited to his descendants through Isaac, "In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed," (Gen. xxii. 18; then to Jacob the younger of the two sons of Isaac; xxvii. 29; and afterwards to Judah and his children, xlix. 8; and lastly to the family of David, (1 Sam. xvi. 12,) who was of the tribe of Judah. The particular stock, from which this branch of righteousness and immortality was to proceed, being thus limited and settled, God was pleased, in the next place, to bring into a nearer and more distinct view the long promised seed; declaring by his prophets the precise time of his coming, the place and miraculous manner of his birth, and so many wonderful particulars of his life, his sufferings, and his death, that by such characteristical marks and notices he might, when he should come, be readily and plainly known. These prophecies, some of them at least, were not only at the time of their delivery, but even to that of their accomplishment, very dark and obscure; but that obscurity proceeded not so much from the terms in which they were expressed, as from the things foretold; which were so seemingly inconsistent, that no human wisdom could reconcile them with each other. For as they sometimes represented the Messiah under the character of a "Deliverer, a Prince whose throne should endure for ever, the Desire of all nations, the Holy One," &c. so at other times they spake of him as a "man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs," as "despised and rejected of men;" as "afflicted, smitten, wounded, bruised, and scourged; numbered with the transgressors, cut off out of the land of the living, and making his grave with the wicked," and yet "with the rich in his death." So much, however, of these prophecies was at all times clear, that from them the Jews, to whom they were delivered, were encouraged to expect a Redeemer to come at a certain limited time; and so exactly were they able to compute the period prefixed by the prophet Daniel, that at the birth of Christ there was a general expectation among the Jews, which from them spread into other nations, of a great King being about that time to be born in Judea. The place also of his birth, and the stock from which he was to spring were as clearly understood; but the Jews, too much attached to the temporal covenant, proud of being the chosen and peculiar people of God, and, from that pride, not comprehending the full extent of the promise made to Abraham, that "in his seed all the nations of the earth should be blessed," expected a temporal deliverer, a king of the Jews only, considered still as a separate and distinct nation. The Jews, they imagined were alone to be redeemed, and that from their temporal enemies, and under their Messiah were to reign for ever over the other kings and nations of the earth; and from this imagination, than which nothing could be more contrary to the express promises made to Abraham, nor more injurious to the character of that God, "whose mercy is" universally "over all his works," proceeded their blindness and backwardness in seeing and believing all that the prophets had spoken, and their indignation against Jesus, for assuming the title, without asserting, what they esteemed to be, the kingdom of the Messiah, the throne of David. With the same prejudices were the disciples and apostles themselves so strongly prepossessed, that when he told them of his sufferings and death, "Peter rebuked him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee," Matt. xvi. 22. Jesus, however, suffered, and died, and rose again from the dead, as he had foretold; and, notwithstanding his sufferings, still claimed to be the Messiah, nay, and even founded his claim upon those very sufferings, asserting, that according to the prophets, "thus it behoved the Messiah to suffer." To the prophets, therefore, he sends them for their conviction, and for the removing those prejudices, which, as long as they subsisted, must have kept them effectually from ever acknowledging his claim, unless they would renounce those Scriptures upon whose authority alone their expectations of a Messiah were grounded. For if the prophets spake only of a victorious triumphant Redeemer of Israel, a King who should never die, it is certain Jesus could not be that Redeemer; for he was oppressed and afflicted, and instead of delivering the Jews, was himself delivered up to their enemies, and by them put to death. What the prophets have written about the sufferings, &c. of the Messiah, we have just now seen; and cannot, I think, but acknowledge their predictions to be very clear and express, and to have been most circumstantially accomplished in Christ Jesus; and perhaps to us, who are not blinded with the vain imaginations of the Jews, it may seem matter of wonder that the apostles should so long and so obstinately shut their eyes against so strong a light. The truth is, they were unwilling to give up the pleasing and flattering expectations of a temporal kingdom, which they understood to be plainly spoken of by the prophets, and knew to be incompatible with a suffering, dying Messiah. By expounding, therefore, "in Moses and all the prophets, the things concerning himself, and by opening their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures," Jesus at length brought them to perceive that the kingdom of the Messiah was not a temporal,

but a spiritual and eternal kingdom; that the redemption promised to Adam and the patriarchs, was not the redemption of the children of Israel only from their carnal enemies and oppressors, (an event in which the first father of the world, and even the patriarchs themselves, could have little or no interest,) but the redemption of all mankind from the power and penalty of sin; to be effected, on the one hand, by Christ's fulfilling all righteousness, the original covenant upon which happiness and immortality were stipulated to Adam; and on the other, by his offering up his soul a sacrifice for sin, that is, paying the penalty of death, which all sinners, all mankind had incurred; paying it not as a debtor, "for he was without sin," but as a surety, who willingly and freely took upon himself to make good the failings, and discharge the obligations of others. Of this plan the death of Christ was a necessary part, and so was his resurrection from the dead; by which, having vanquished that enemy, who brought death and sin into the world, he was put into possession of that throne which was "to endure for ever, and was, like David, appointed by God to reign, not over the Jewish nation exclusive of the rest of mankind, but over all those of every nation of the world, who should, like the Jews, make themselves the people of God, by entering into a covenant with him to keep his commandments; the sole tenure by which the children of Israel became originally the people of God; over whom, as such, God, their legal, their constitutional King, if I may so speak, set David as a ruler under him, and promised to continue that delegated vicarial sceptre of righteousness in his posterity for ever. Of all these points there are frequent intimations in the books of Moses, in the Prophets, and in the Psalms; by a fair and unprejudiced examination of which, the disciples and apostles might be certainly convinced, that, according to the scheme of the redemption of mankind promised to Adam and the patriarchs, as well as by the express word of prophecy, the Messiah was to die and rise again from the dead. And as, on the one part, had the Scriptures been silent upon the latter of these two articles, they had, from the testimony of their own senses, &c. sufficient proofs of Christ's being risen from the dead; so, on the other, from the exact accomplishment of all the predictions relating to his life, his sufferings, his death and burial, they might, without any farther evidence than that of his body being no where to be found, have infallibly collected from the Scriptures only, that he was risen from the dead. And therefore, when all these testimonies concurred to prove the resurrection, how was it possible for them to withhold their assent?

The prophecies of Jesus himself concerning his rising from the dead on the third day, were another proof of the same kind, upon which they might as reasonably and as certainly depend, as upon that grounded on the predictions of Moses and the prophets. Moses had foretold that the Messiah should be a prophet, and they had been convinced that Jesus was one in the largest sense of that word, by many instances, which had fallen under their own observation, those particularly relating to his passion and crucifixion, most of the minute and extraordinary circumstances of which he had acquainted them with before they came to pass,—such as the treachery of Judas, the desertion of his disciples, Peter's disowning him thrice, the insults and abuses he underwent from the chief priests and elders, and the cruel mockery of the Roman soldiers. The exact correspondence of each of these events with their several predictions, afforded the strongest presumption imaginable in favour of the resurrection, as it was in like manner foretold by him, of whose prescience they had just then received so many convincing proofs; especially as some of the predicted events were of such a nature as not to be foreseen, but by that eye which penetrates into the inmost recesses of the heart of man, and spieth out all his thoughts even before they are conceived. For although the chief priests and pharisees had for some time "sought how they might put him to death," yet they had resolved against doing it on the "feast-day, for fear of the people," (Matt. xxvi. 4, 5,) who, but a very few days before, had in a sort of triumphal procession attended his entry into Jerusalem, cutting down branches of palm, strewing them before him, spreading their garments in the way, and crying, "Hosannah, blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord," (Mark, xi. 8, 9.) Yet on the feast-day was he put to death, at the instance of the chief priests and pharisees; and by the clamours of this very people, against the inclination and endeavours of Pilate, in whom the power of life and death resided, and who, as his judge, declared him innocent again and again, and when he gave him up to be crucified, (Matt. xxvii. 24.) "took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it." This sudden change in the counsels of the chief priests, in the hearts of the multitude, and in the manners of Pontius Pilate,* who was a man of a haughty, rough, intractable, and implacable spirit, who, so far from having any complaisance for the Jewish nation, or regard for their customs or religion, had all along treated them with the most cruel and tyrannical insolence, and who more than once had contemptuously acted in direct opposition to their most just and reasonable demands; a change, I say, so sudden, from

* Pearson on the Creed.

one extreme to another, could not with any certainty be previously deduced from the consideration of the instability of human counsels, and the fickleness of the mind of man. The same thing may be said concerning the desertion of his disciples, and Peter's disowning him thrice, each of which events came to pass within a few hours after they were foretold, and within the very time prefixed; contrary to their own express and confident declarations, that though they "should die with him, they would never deny (renounce) him," (Matt. xxvi. 35,) made at the time and upon the occasion of this very prophecy. Add to this the inhuman abuses, insults, and mockery he endured from the chief priests, and from the Roman soldiers; for these surely were no usual part of the punishment inflicted upon criminals, the most flagitious of whom are seldom treated with more severity than their sentence requires, especially when that sentence extends to taking away their lives by a lingering and painful death. And our Saviour's case undoubtedly deserved more than ordinary compassion, especially from the Roman soldiers, as he had been pronounced innocent by the Roman governor himself, and was known to be sacrificed only to the envy and malice of the Jews. Therefore that Jesus, who foretold all these extraordinary particulars, was endued with the all-prescient Spirit of God, the disciples could have no reason to doubt; and consequently could have as little cause to call his resurrection in question, which he had foreseen and foretold by the same divine Spirit, from whom no event, how remote or uncommon soever, can be concealed, and who can never deceive or lie. And therefore the apostles, even without the testimony of those who had seen him after he was risen, without the authority of the Scriptures foretelling his resurrection, and without the infallible proofs of his being alive after his passion, which they themselves received from seeing him, handling him, and conversing with him, might and ought to have believed that he was risen from the dead, upon the single evidence of his having predicted it, joined to that of his body being no where to be found, as Saint John in fact did, and was therefore pronounced blessed by our Saviour himself, in these words spoken to Saint Thomas upon the occasion of his refusing to believe without the attestation of his senses: "Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed; blessed are they who have not seen, and yet have believed." Upon which more hereafter.

I shall here rest the cause, and close the evidence of the resurrection of Jesus; since it is manifest, that the apostles, who were to be witnesses of this great event, and preachers of the gospel to all the world, had no doubt or scruple left concerning his being really, that is, bodily, risen from the dead, after his appearing to Saint Thomas; for they went into Galilee, "to a mountain where Jesus had appointed them," in obedience to his command, and in expectation of meeting him there according to his promise, "where when they saw him, they worshipped him," (Matt. xxviii. 16, 17;) from thence they returned again to Jerusalem, and continued in that city, in obedience to another command, "waiting for the promise of the Father," (Acts, i. 4;) which within a few days after was made good to them by the coming of the Holy Ghost, (ii. 4.) Upon these two points I beg leave to say a few words for the better understanding some passages relating to them in Saint Matthew, Saint Luke, and the Acts of the Apostles.

Sect. XX.—All the males among the Jews were, by the law of Moses, (Exod. xxiii. 17; Deut. xvi. 16,) commanded to repair thrice every year to Jerusalem, "to appear," as it is expressed, "before the Lord;" namely, at the three great feasts,—the Passover, called also the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of Weeks, named Pentecost, and the Feast of Tabernacles. Each of these solemnities lasted a whole week. The apostles, therefore, and disciples, who had come up to Jerusalem from Galilee, their native country, not merely to attend upon their master, but in obedience to the above cited law of Moses, to keep the passover, continued, as they were obliged to do, at Jerusalem, till the end of that festival. And there Jesus appeared to them a second time, (eight days after his first appearance,) Saint Thomas being with them, (John, xx. 26.) The next appearance of Christ, to any number of his disciples together, was at the Sea of Tiberias, called also the Sea of Galilee; and this is expressly said by Saint John, (xxi. 14,) to be "the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after he was risen from the dead;" from whence it is evident, that the appearance on a mountain in Galilee, mentioned by Saint Matthew, was subsequent to this spoken of by Saint John, and was also in a different place, on a mountain, whereas the latter was by the Sea of Tiberias. Three reasons may be assigned for our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee. 1*st*, Galilee was the country in which he had resided above thirty years, from his infancy to the time when he first began to preach the kingdom of God: there did he first begin to declare and evidence his mission by miracles, and in the cities of that region did he perform the greatest part of his mighty works; so that he must necessarily have been more known, and have had more followers in that country, than in any other region of Judea. And therefore one reason for his shewing himself in Galilee after he was risen from the dead seems to

have been, that, where he was personally known to so many people, he might have the greater number of competent witnesses to his resurrection. Accordingly, Saint Paul tells us he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once, which therefore in all probability happened at the mountain in Galilee, where, Saint Matthew says, Jesus appointed his disciples to meet him, as I have observed once before. 2*dly*, Galilee was also the native country of the greatest part, if not of all his apostles and disciples. There they dwelt, and supported their families, some of them at least, by mean and laborious occupations. So strait and so necessitous a condition of life, must needs have rendered a long absence from their own homes highly inconvenient to them at that time, especially when the barley harvest, which always fell out about the time of the passover, was either begun, or upon the point of beginning. As soon, therefore, as the paschal solemnity was over, which detained them necessarily at Jerusalem for a whole week, it was natural to suppose that they would return into Galilee. Upon which supposition our Saviour, before his death, promised after he was risen, "he would go before them into Galilee;" which remarkable expression was again made use of by the angel after his resurrection, (Mark, xvi. 7,) who bade the women tell his disciples, "that he" Jesus "would go before them into Galilee;" that is, would be in Galilee before them, and would meet them there. Christ, indeed, afterwards commands them by the same women to go into Galilee, adding a promise, that they should see him. But this command must not be understood to imply a suspicion, that without those peremptory orders of their master, they would have continued at Jerusalem, where, after the festival was over, they had nothing to do. It ought rather to be taken as a confirmation of his promise of meeting them in Galilee, and a strong encouragement to them to depend upon the performance of it in the due place and season. The time of their entering upon the apostolical office of preaching the gospel to all the world, was not yet come; neither were they yet fully prepared or qualified for that important work; which, after they had once undertaken it, was to be not only the sole employment of their lives, but the occasion of their leaving their fathers, their children, their country, and their friends, to travel up and down the world, exposed to hardships, dangers, persecution, and death, in unknown and remote corners of the earth. Of all which their master had frequently forewarned them before his death, and particularly in that affectionate discourse he held to them the night in which he was betrayed. To prepare them therefore by degrees for a state of so much affliction and mortification, and to give them an opportunity of seeing and providing, in the best manner they were able, for their relations and families, to whom they were soon to bid adieu for ever, their gracious Lord, who knew how to indulge, because he had himself felt, the affections and infirmities of human nature, and who, by recommending his mother, even from the cross, to the care of his beloved disciple, (John, xix. 26, 27,) had taught them what regards were due to those tender ties of nature, not only permitted them to return into Galilee, but promised to meet them there, and did in fact meet them there, not only once, but several times; as may be inferred from what Saint Luke says of his having shewn himself to them "for forty days after his passion," (Acts, i. 3,) compared with what Saint John says of the appearance by the lake of Tiberias, which he expressly calls the "third time" that Christ shewed himself to his disciples after his resurrection. After this Saint Matthew speaks of another appearance in Galilee, on a mountain, where, adds he, "Jesus appointed his disciples." When this appointment was made, there is no intimation given in any of the evangelists. If it was not at the appearance at the Lake of Tiberias, which there is no reason to imagine it was, Saint John saying nothing of any such matter, it was probably at some other appearance in Galilee, between this last and that mentioned by Saint Matthew. And as there was a great number of brethren present upon that occasion, it is rational to conclude, that timely notice was given, as well of the day, as of the place of meeting. But however this might have been, I am persuaded that the greatest part of the appearances of Christ "for the forty days after his passion," were in Galilee, since the reasons that required the apostles to return thither, were as strong for their continuing there, till the approach of the Feast of Weeks, or Pentecost, should call them back to Jerusalem.

3*dly*, Another reason for meeting his disciples in Galilee, and for concluding that the appearances mentioned in the Acts were chiefly in that country, and that there were many of them, may be deduced from what Saint Luke tells us of the subjects upon which our Saviour spoke to his disciples on these occasions, namely, "of things pertaining to the kingdom of God," Acts, i. 3. Before they set out upon the great work of preaching the kingdom of God to all the world, it was necessary that they should be fully instructed in the doctrines they were to preach, and in the several functions of the apostolical office; that they should thoroughly understand the intentions of their master, and have some view of the means and assistances by which they should be enabled to perform a task so apparently above their abilities; and some hopes and

encouragements to support them under the prospect of those difficulties and dangers they were given to expect in propagating the gospel. In order to all this, many inveterate prejudices relating to the law of Moses and the Jewish nation were to be rooted out; the scheme of God in the universal redemption of mankind was to be laid open to them; many human affections, reluctances, and terrors were to be subdued, and their hearts to be fortified with courage and constancy, a disregard and contempt of hardships, perils, pain, and death. To these several purposes nothing could more conduce than frequent visits from their Lord, whose resurrection (of which every appearance was a fresh proof) was an unquestionable evidence of his power; whose every appearance was an instance of his affection and condescension to them, and of his fidelity in performing the promise he had made before his passion of coming to them again after his death, and being with them for a little while before he went to his Father; and whose fidelity and exactness in thus performing his promise, was an infallible earnest and security for the coming of that Comforter who was to supply his place, "to guide them into all truth, to bring to their remembrance whatever he had spoken to them, to enable them to do greater works than he had done," and to fill their hearts "with that joy which it should not be in the power of man to take from them." Add to this, the weight and authority derived to his precepts and instructions from their being delivered by himself in person; and the great measure of strength accruing to their faith from their having frequently before their eyes the Captain of their salvation, who, after having fought with the powers of darkness, and triumphed over sin and death, was to "sit down thenceforth at the right hand of God," invested with the power of assisting those who should fight under his banner, and rewarding their toils, their sufferings, and their death with a crown of immortal life. And if nothing could more effectually bring about all these great effects than Christ's frequently meeting his apostles, it will evidently appear that no place could be more proper for those meetings than Galilee, if we consider, that the apostles, having their habitations in that country, might reside there without any suspicion, and assemble without any fear of the persecutors and murderers of their master, the chief priests and the Roman governor, for Galilee was under the jurisdiction of Herod, (Luke, xxiii. 7.) Whereas had they remained in Jerusalem, and continued to assemble frequently together, while the report of their master's being risen from the dead was fresh and in every body's mouth, the chief priests and elders, whose hatred or apprehensions of Jesus Christ were not extinguished by his blood, as appears by their persecuting and murdering his followers long after,—these rulers of the Jews, I say, would undoubtedly have given such interruptions to those meetings, and thrown such obstacles in the way, as must have necessitated our Lord to interpose his miraculous power to prevent or remove them. Now, as all these inconveniences might be avoided by our Saviour's meeting his disciples in Galilee, it is more agreeable to the wisdom of God, (which, as Mr Locke observes,* is not usually at the expense of miracles, but only in cases that require them,) to suppose these frequent meetings to have been in Galilee rather than in Jerusalem, and more analogous to the proceeding of our Lord himself, who, being in danger from the scribes and pharisees, refrained from appearing publicly in Jerusalem for some time before the hour appointed for his sufferings and death was come, and "walked in Galilee," as Saint John tells us, (vii. 1,) "for he would not walk in Jewry, because the Jews sought to kill him." From these considerations I think it clear, that all the appearances of Christ to his disciples, from that to Saint Thomas, mentioned in Saint John, to that last in Jerusalem, on the day of his ascending, mentioned by Saint Luke both in his gospel and in the Acts, were in Galilee: from whence when the apostles returned afterwards to Jerusalem, they were covered from the apprehension of giving any umbrage by residing there, for the short space to come between their return and the time of their entering upon their apostolical office, by the obligation they were under, in common with the rest of their brethren the Jews, to repair to that city for the celebration of the Feast of Weeks, (Acts, ii. 1, &c.) called also Pentecost: upon the most solemn day of which festival they were, according to the promise of their master, filled with the Holy Ghost, and endued with power from above to defy all danger, and surmount all opposition in preaching the gospel of Christ.

And hence we learn, that all the latter part of the 24th chapter of Saint Luke's gospel, from the 49th verse to the end inclusive, relates to what happened at Jerusalem, &c. after the return of the apostles from Galilee: of whose departure into Galilee after the resurrection of Christ, or of his promise of going thither before them, this evangelist having not thought it to his purpose to make any mention, thought it as needless to say any thing of their leaving Jerusalem; since the scene of the last appearance, as well as of the former related by him, was in that city; and since to those who by any other means should come to be aquainted with the whole history of our Saviour, there would be no danger of confounding those two appearances. As to

* Reasonableness of Christianity.

those who should happen to meet with no other account but his gospel, (if such a thing could be supposed,) no great damage could arise from their mistaking them to be one and the same.

Sect. XXI. — By this long and scrupulous examination of the several particulars which constitute the evidence of the resurrection, I have endeavoured to shew, that never were there any facts that could better abide the test. And if I have in any degree succeeded in my endeavours, I shall neither repent my own labour, nor apologize to the reader for having dwelt so long upon this subject: since the conclusion that will inevitably follow from this proposition is, that never was there a fact more fully proved than the resurrection of Jesus Christ. For besides the testimony of some, who may be supposed to have had no prejudices either for or against the resurrection, — I mean the Roman soldiers, who reported that his sepulchre was miraculously opened by an angel, or a divinity, (for so they must have styled that celestial apparition;) and besides the testimony of others, who were apparently prepossessed with notions contrary to the belief of Christ's being risen from the dead, and yet affirmed that they were not only told by the angels that he was risen, but that they themselves had seen him, talked with him, and handled him. Besides this human testimony, I say, which, considering all the circumstances attending it, must be allowed to have been sufficient to prove any event, that was not either impossible or improbable in the highest degree, there were (as it was reasonable to expect there should be) other evidences as extraordinary and miraculous as the resurrection itself. Of this kind are the predictions contained in the writings of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalmist, setting forth the design and purpose of God to redeem mankind by the righteousness, sufferings, death, and resurrection of the "seed of the woman." Without the resurrection, this great scheme of divine mercy had been incomplete; by that it was perfected, and the triumph over death added to that over sin; the Messiah thereby accomplishing all that the Scriptures foretold of his glory and power. When, therefore, one part of the promises relating to Jesus had been so exactly made good in his life and death, it is reasonable to conclude, that God did not fail to fulfil the others in his resurrection.

In the same class of evidence may also be ranked the prophecies of Jesus himself, relating to his rising from the dead, which, coming from one whose other predictions (of which there had been many) had been always accomplished, deserved to be credited no less than the others, and were not only verified by the event itself, but confirmed by other subsequent events, foretold likewise by him before his passion, and linked with and depending upon that great proof of his divine power. Such, for instance, were his meeting his disciples in Galilee, his being with them a little while before he went to his Father, his ascension into heaven, and his sending unto them the promised Comforter, with all the glorious faculties and powers they received upon his coming. With so various, so astonishing, so well connected and irrefragable a chain of evidence, is this important article of the resurrection bound up and fortified.

But all these proofs were not exhibited to all the Jews; for "not to all the people was Jesus shewn" alive after his passion, but "to witnesses chosen before of God; to us (saith Saint Peter) who did eat and drink with him after that he arose from the dead," (Acts, x. 41.) That Christ made choice of a select number of disciples, and particularly of twelve, (who were called apostles,) to be witnesses of the great actions of his life, and especially of his resurrection, and preachers of his gospel to all the world, is a thing too well known to need any proof. To qualify them for this double office, he not only, upon many occasions both before and after his crucifixion, discoursed to them in particular "of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God," and poured upon them all the various gifts of the Holy Spirit, but gave them every kind of evidence of his being risen from the dead, which the most scrupulous and sceptical could imagine or require; "shewing himself alive" to them "by many infallible proofs," such as eating and drinking with them, &c. "for forty days after his passion." And indeed, it is highly expedient that those, upon whose testimony and credit the truth of any fact is to be established, should have the fullest and most unexceptionable evidence of it that can be had; because their having had all possible means of information, must needs add great weight and authority to their depositions. Hence then we may learn the reason of our Saviour's appearing so often to his disciples after his resurrection, of his requiring them to handle him, and see that it was he himself, of his eating and drinking with them, of his referring them to the Scriptures, to his own predictions, and to the testimony of those to whom he had appeared, before he came to them; and lastly, of his satisfying the unreasonable scruples of Saint Thomas, who, being one of the chosen witnesses, (one of the twelve,) it was proper he should have an equal knowledge of the fact he was to attest with his other brethren the apostles. That this perfect knowledge of the things they were to give testimony to, was necessary for those who were ordained to be apostles, is farther evident from the following words of Saint Peter, (Acts, i. 15—26,) who, after the ascension of our Lord, proposing to the

rest of the disciples to fill up the vacancy made by the transgression and death of Judas, by electing one to take part with them in their ministry and apostleship, describes the qualifications requisite in an apostle, by limiting their choice in these words: "Wherefore, of these men that have companied with us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us, must one be ordained to be a witness with us of his resurrection." Hence also it is plain, that all these infallible proofs were not vouchsafed by Christ to his disciples, merely out of a particular favour and regard to them, that they might believe and be saved; but with a farther view, that others also, through their testimony, founded on the completest and exactest information, might likewise believe and be saved. The reproof of Christ to Saint Thomas, for not believing without the attestation of his senses, implied in the blessing pronounced by him on those "who, having not seen, had yet believed," is a clear argument, that our Saviour thought his disciples had sufficient cause to believe he was risen from the dead, even before he shewed himself to them. And that they had so in fact, I have above endeavoured to prove; and that Saint John did believe, before he saw his master, he himself assures us. Had Christ therefore intended nothing more, than to bring his disciples to a belief of his resurrection, he might have left them to the testimony of the Roman soldiers, to that of the women, to the writings of Moses and the Prophets, to his own predictions, to the state of the sepulchre, and that wonderful circumstance of his body's being no where to be found: to all this evidence he might, I say, have left them, without appearing to them himself, and left them without excuse, had they still continued faithless and unbelieving. But though the apostles had upon this evidence believed their master to be risen from the dead; yet, without those other infallible proofs mentioned by Saint Luke, they would certainly have not been so well qualified for witnesses of the resurrection to all the world; that is to say, the reasons upon which they believed would not have appeared so convincing. The heathens would not have admitted the testimony of Moses and the Prophets, of whose writings they knew nothing, and of whose divine authority they had no proof. And as to the depositions of the women, besides that they were strangers to their characters, they might, from Christ's appearing to them, with some colour have demanded why he did not appear likewise to those whom he commissioned to preach his gospel, and to be witnesses of his resurrection. But when, on the contrary, the apostles could tell them that they themselves had seen Christ, had handled him, eat and drank with him, and conversed with him for forty days after that he was risen from the dead, they could not but allow them to have had the fullest evidence of the resurrection, supposing what they told them to be true; and of this, the purity of their doctrine, the holiness of their lives, their courage and constancy in defying and undergoing all kinds of hardships, dangers, pain and death, in advancing a cause, which every worldly interest obliged them to desert, joined to the attestation of the Holy Spirit, "working with them, and confirming the word with signs following," were such assurances as no other man could give of his veracity.

From what has been said, it may appear, how little ground there is for the cavils that have been raised upon our Lord's forbidding Mary Magdalene to touch him; and upon his not shewing himself after he was risen to the Jews, to the chief priests and elders, to the scribes and pharisees: the one of which has been interpreted as a refusal to Mary Magdalene of the necessary evidence of his being risen from the dead; and the other, as a breach of the promise, implied in these words, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign, and there shall be no sign given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas; for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly, so shall the Son of Man," &c. (Matt. xii. 39, 40.) In which, it is said, Christ promised to appear, after he was risen, to that "evil and adulterous generation," that is, to the Jews, &c. as contradistinguished from his disciples and apostles. That Christ promised by these words to give that "evil generation" sufficient proof of his rising from the grave after having lain in it three days, I readily allow; but that he promised to appear to them, I absolutely deny, and think it impossible to prove he did, from the above-cited passage. Of his rising again from the grave on the third day, the Jews had the testimony of the prophets, of the predictions of Christ himself, the evidence of the Roman soldiers, of his body's being no where to be found, of the women and disciples, and apostles, to whom he had appeared, and who, before the Sanhedrim, bore witness to his resurrection, and, having just before wrought a miracle upon a lame man, declared that they had done it in the name of "Jesus of Nazareth, whom," say they, "ye crucified, whom God raised from the dead," (Acts, iv. 10.) This surely was evidence sufficient to convince any reasonable and unprejudiced person; and, consequently, to acquit our Lord of the promise of giving that "evil generation" satisfactory proofs of his being risen from the dead. To the evidence vouchsafed by Christ, either out of

favour to those "who had forsaken all and followed him," or to those whom he had chosen to be "witnesses of him to all the world," they certainly could have no just pretensions; who, instead of being his disciples, had rejected his doctrine, and put him to death as an impostor and blasphemer; and instead of shewing any disposition to embrace or propagate his gospel, opposed it with all their power, and by threats and punishments forbade his apostles to preach any more in his name. That Mary Magdalene was convinced that it was Jesus who appeared to her, I have already shewn very fully; and that was all that was necessary for her single self: supposing, therefore, that she never had afterwards the permission of touching or embracing her master, (which, by the way, cannot be proved,) neither had she, nor any one else, reason to complain or cavil, since neither her own faith, nor that of any other person, depended upon her having that proof of the resurrection of Christ; for she was not an apostle, nor one of the "chosen witnesses." And it is very remarkable that none of the apostles, either in preaching to the unconverted Jews or Gentiles, or in their epistles to the Church, ever make any mention of the appearances of Christ to the women; and the evangelists seem to have related them only upon account of their being connected with other more important parts of the history of the resurrection. The truth is, the testimony of the women, though of great weight with the apostles, and with those who received it from their own mouths, was but second-hand hear-say evidence to those who had it only from the apostles' report; who, for that reason, insisted always upon their having themselves seen their master, "after that he was risen from the dead;" a circumstance, as far as I can recollect, not omitted by any of them, in their arguments upon the resurrection of Jesus; as may be seen in the passages of Scripture that give any particular account of those discourses. And thus Saint Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, (xv. 8,) after enumerating many appearances of Christ to the twelve apostles, and others, closes all with saying, "and last of all he was seen of me also." So much care did they take to give reasonable evidence for the reasonable faith they required.

Sect. XXII. — All that has hitherto been said, relates chiefly to the proofs of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, as they were laid before the apostles, those "chosen witnesses" of that great and astonishing event. And I hope, upon a serious and attentive view of the fair and unimposing manner in which those proofs were offered to their consideration, and of the number and certainty of the facts upon which they were grounded, every judicious and candid inquirer after truth will allow, that, to the apostles at least, the resurrection of Jesus was most fully and most unexceptionably proved. I shall now proceed to lay before the reader some arguments (for I cannot enter into all) that may induce us, who live at so remote a distance of time from that age of evidence and miracles, to believe that Christ rose from the dead.

The first, and the principal argument, is the testimony of those chosen witnesses, transmitted down in writing, either penned by themselves, or authorized by their inspection and approbation.

The second, is the existence of the Christian religion.

Before we admit the testimony of these "chosen witnesses" contained in the Gospels, the Acts, the Epistles, and the Revelation, it may be proper to consider, in the first place, what reasons there are for our believing this testimony to be genuine; or, in other words, believing them to be the authors of those books, which are now received under their names. And in the next place, what argument can be offered to induce us to give credit to this testimony, supposing it genuine.

To prove the apostles and evangelists * to be the authors of those Scriptures, which are now received under their names, we have the concurrent attestation of all the earliest writers of the Church, deduced by an uninterrupted and uncontrolled tradition, from the very times of the apostles; which is such an authentication of these sacred records, as is not to be overturned by bare presumptions, and a surmised and unproved charge of forgery. But for the proofs of this proposition, I shall refer the reader to the discourses of those learned men, † who have treated more particularly upon this subject, and shall content myself with offering in support of those proofs the following considerations; in which I shall endeavour to shew, 1*st*, The probability of the apostles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of the religion they preached, and of their disciples having preserved and transmitted those writings to posterity. 2*dly*, The improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection.

* I use these two words, Apostles and Evangelists, in this place, to denote and distinguish the authors of the four Gospels, the Acts, and the Epistles, &c. though they might all have been comprehended under the general term apostles, by which title not only the twelve, so called by Christ himself, but Matthias afterwards, and Paul, and all the seventy or seventy-two disciples, are mentioned by some of the fathers. Of this last number were the evangelists Mark and Luke, (as Dr Whitby has shewn from Origen and Epiphanius,) and as such were qualified by their own personal knowledge of most of the facts, and by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, to write their gospels, without the inspection of the two great apostles Peter and Paul, which yet (as we are told by some of the fathers) was a farther authority given to them, and such as would have sufficed though they had not been themselves particularly inspired.

† See Dr Whitby's Prefatory Discourses to his Annotations upon the Gospels, Acts, &c. See also L'Abbadie de la Religion Chrétienne, tom. II.

First, If the precepts and examples of Jesus Christ and his apostles were to be the rules by which all those who, in succeeding ages, should believe in him, were required to govern themselves, it seems most consonant to the wisdom of God, because agreeable to what he himself practised when he gave the law to the Israelites, to commit those rules of salvation to writing, rather than to the unsure and treacherous conveyance of oral tradition; which cannot with any safety be depended upon for scarce so much as one or two generations. It is therefore highly reasonable to suppose, that the same Spirit which incited and enabled the apostles to preach the gospel, and bear witness to the resurrection of Jesus Christ in every nation of the known world, should likewise incite and enable them to deliver down to posterity, in a method the least liable to uncertainty and error, that testimony, and those precepts, upon which the faith and practice of after-times were to be established, especially when it is, in the *second* place, considered, that all revelation, (revelation, I mean, of the doctrines and system of the gospel) was confined to the apostles, and consequently ended with them. The power of working miracles, speaking with other tongues, casting out unclean spirits, &c. was frequently, if not universally, given to the first converts to Christianity; and some of these gifts were continued for many generations in the Church. But to the apostles only was our Saviour pleased to reveal his will. Accordingly, in the epistles of Saint Paul* we see that those Christians who are endowed with many and various gifts of the Holy Spirit, stood, however, in need of the instructions and directions of that apostle, in many points both of faith and practice; and the earliest writers after the apostles, though possessed themselves of many of those miraculous powers, instead of pretending to immediate revelation, have upon all occasions recourse to the Holy Scriptures, which they acknowledge to have been written by the assistance of the Divine Spirit, as to that fountain from whence alone they can derive the waters of life: both which appeals, as well that made to the apostles by their contemporaries, as those made by succeeding Christians to the Scriptures, would have been unnecessary, had they, like the apostles, been taught all things by revelation, and been guided into all truth by the Holy Spirit.

This being the case with those Christians who were converted to the faith by the preaching of the apostles themselves, and who were to transmit to succeeding ages that gospel upon which, according to their belief, the salvation of mankind depended; is it not natural to imagine they would take the most effectual means to supply those defects, which they were sensible of in themselves; and to guard against those errors which, through the imbecility of the human mind, they had fallen into, even while the voices of the apostles still sounded in their ears; and to which their posterity must of necessity be still more liable? And what more effectual means could they pursue, than either to obtain in writing from the apostles themselves, the evidences and doctrines of the Christian faith; or, which amounted to much the same thing, to write them down from their mouths, or under their inspection and approbation; or, lastly, to transcribe from their own memories what they could recollect of the doctrines and instructions of the apostles? Of these three methods, the two first were unquestionably the best; the last was subject to many imperfections and mistakes: for though our Saviour promised to enable his apostles by the Holy Spirit, "to call to mind whatever he had said unto them," I do not find that the memories of those who heard the apostles were ever assisted in the like miraculous manner. If the apostles therefore had not, either from their care for the "household of faith," or from the suggestions of the Holy Spirit, transmitted the proofs and doctrines of the gospel to posterity in one of the two first-mentioned ways, it is to be presumed they would have been called upon to do it by those, who looked upon them as teachers commissioned and inspired by the Spirit of Truth, and "who alone had the words of eternal life." And if neither of those two desirable things could have been obtained, recourse would undoubtedly have been had to the last. And indeed it is evident, from Saint Luke's preface to his gospel, that many writings of this kind were current among the Christians of those times; none of which, that I know of, having come down to us, it is to be presumed they were superseded by writings of greater authority; that is to say, writings either penned by the apostles themselves, or authorized by their inspection and approbation; because this seems to be the best account that can be given for the different fate that hath attended these several writings; the former having disappeared and died soon after their birth; and the latter having survived now almost seventeen centuries, in the same degree of esteem and veneration with which they were at first received by the converts of the apostolic age. I say by the converts of the apostolic age; for that the difference between these writings was made in that age is very probable; 1*st*, Because those very contemporaries of the apostles stood themselves in need of their instructions, admonitions, and exhortations for their own direction and encouragement; and 2*dly*, For the conviction of the next age, who were to receive the gospel

* See particularly the Epistles to the Corinthians.

from their hands, they wanted the testimony and authority of those persons to whom the facts upon which their faith depended were the most completely proved, and who alone, in matters of doctrine, were "guided into all truth" by the infallible "Spirit of God;" for by their own evidence they could prove no more than what fell within the compass of their own knowledge, which could extend no farther than to what they had themselves seen of the apostles, or heard from their mouths; and this evidence of theirs could acquire no farther authority by having been committed to writing. The apostles alone could prove, what they only knew; and were the only authentic preachers of those doctrines, which they alone received from Christ, or, after his ascension, from the Holy Spirit. Their successors, besides bearing testimony to their characters, and giving evidence perhaps of some collateral facts which had fallen under their own observations, could do no more than witness their depositions; that is, that these and these were the facts, and these and these were the doctrines delivered by the apostles. If the apostles, therefore, either from the secret instigation of the Holy Ghost, or from their paternal care and affection for "the household of faith, or at the request of their "children in Christ Jesus," did commit to writing the proofs and doctrines of the Christian religion, (as it is reasonable to suppose they did,) it is as reasonable to conclude, that what they either writ or approved, must necessarily have been preferred to all other writings whatever.

And as the writings of the apostles must, for the reasons above mentioned, have been of great weight and importance to the Christians of their times, and of still greater to those of succeeding ages, who could not, like their predecessors, upon any occasion have recourse to the living and infallible oracles of God, it is natural to imagine that the persons in whose hands those sacred and invaluable treasures were deposited would preserve and guard them with the utmost fidelity and care, would impart copies of them to such of their brethren who could not have access to the originals, and would, from the same principle of Christian benevolence and fidelity, see that those copies were transcribed with all that exactness which human nature, ever liable to slips and errors, was capable of. The same care, under the same allowances, it is to be supposed, would be also taken by those who should translate them into the several languages spoken by Christians of different nations, who did not understand that in which the apostles wrote.

These several steps appear to me so natural and obvious, that I cannot but think any set of reasonable and honest men could not fail of making them, under the same circumstances, as attended the first preachers and converts of Christianity. And from hence arises a strong presumption in favour of those accounts which inform us that the apostles and evangelists were the genuine authors of those writings which are now received under their names,—That although many, even in the apostles' times, "had taken in hand," as Saint Luke expresses it, "to set forth in order a declaration of those things which were most surely believed amongst Christians, even as they delivered them, who were eye-witnesses and ministers of the word;" and although some years after the death of the apostles, many gospels, epistles, &c. appeared, which were ascribed to them, to the Virgin Mary, and even to Jesus Christ himself; yet those only, which we now account canonical, were admitted as such, from the very earliest ages of Christianity. That these canonical books were preserved and kept, with the most scrupulous and religious care, by the several churches or societies of Christians; who did not, and indeed upon their principles could not, presume to add to them, or take from them the least tittle. That copies of them were immediately dispersed throughout the whole Christian world; "the apostles" (saith Irenæus, lib. 3. l. 1,) "first preparing the gospel, and afterwards, by the will of God, delivering it to us in the Scriptures, to be thenceforward the pillar and foundation of our faith." "And the first successors of the apostles," (as Eusebius informs us, Hist. Eccl. lib. iii. c. 37,) "leaving their countries, preached to them who had not heard of the Christian faith, and then delivered to them, as the foundation of their faith, the writings of the Holy Evangelists." That the originals of the epistles were still preserved in the respective churches to which they were directed in the time of Tertullian, who, writing to the heretics of his age, namely, of the third century, bids them "go to the apostolical churches, where the authentic epistles of the apostles," saith he, "are still recited." That, lastly, translations of these Scriptures were made so early as to precede the general admission of some parts of them, which were afterwards received as genuine: the Syriac version, for instance, being so ancient, that it leaves out the second Epistle of Peter, the second and third Epistles of John, and the Revelation, as being for a time controverted in some of the Eastern churches; which, by the way, shews how scrupulous the first Christians were about admitting into the canon of Scripture, writings which, though bearing the names of the apostles, and received by some churches as genuine, were yet questioned and suspected by others. To all which we may add still farther, that these several accounts relating merely to facts, tend only to establish another fact, namely, that the apostles and evangelists did

compose the gospels, epistles, &c. ascribed to them, which fact is capable of being proved by the same kind of evidence as any other fact of the same nature. That the evidences of this fact cannot be overturned, but upon such principles as will equally subvert the proofs of all facts that existed at any great distance of time from the present. That we ought therefore either to admit this fact, or reject all those, without distinction, which stand only upon the credit of histories and records, of the truth of any of which we can have no stronger assurances, than we have of the authenticity of these holy writings.*

Sect. XXIII.—The next point to be considered is, the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection.

The reasons given under the foregoing article, to shew the probability of the apostles having left in writing the evidences and doctrines of Christianity, and of their disciples having preserved and transmitted those writings to their successors, will lead us to discover the improbability of any books forged in the names of the apostles escaping detection. For if it was necessary for the Christians, even of the apostolic age, to have in writing the directions and instructions of the apostles in many points both of faith and practice, as is evident it was from almost all the epistles, it was as necessary for them to be assured, that what was delivered to them in the name of an apostle, was certainly of his inditing. And this was to be known many ways; for surely we may have undoubted proofs of such a one's being the author of such a book or letter, without having seen him write it with his own hand, or having heard from his own mouth that he wrote it. "The apostles" (saith Irenæus) "having first preached the gospel, delivered it afterwards to us in the Scriptures." Now, as we have no reason to believe, from any accounts that can be depended upon, that any of those styled apostles, besides the six† whose works we now have, left any thing in writing; if these words of Irenæus be taken to relate to the whole number of the apostles, it will follow from them, that even those apostles who wrote nothing themselves, did yet deliver to their "children in Christ" such parts of the Scriptures as had come to their hands. In which case, those Scriptures, thus delivered and recommended by an apostle, must have been allowed to have the same authority, as if they had been written by that apostle himself; since he, as well as his brethren who wrote them, was under the inspiration and guidance of that Holy Spirit who, according to the promise of Christ, was to "lead them into all truth;" and therefore could not be ignorant whether the matters contained in those Scriptures were true or false. But if the general term "apostles" be limited to such of them only as composed the writings, called by Irenæus "the Scriptures;" the meaning of his words will be, that the apostles, when they had preached the gospel, (that is, the whole system of facts and doctrines which it was necessary for Christians to know and believe,) committed it to writing for the use of the churches, to serve thenceforward, as he expresses it, for "the pillar and foundation" of their faith in Christ Jesus. Those churches, therefore, were the proper evidences to prove the apostles to be the authors of those writings which they received from them. And the testimony they gave to that matter of fact, as, on the one hand, it does not appear to have been liable to any suspicion of fraud; so, on the other, it seems equally free from any probability of error, or misinformation. For they must have had certain knowledge of the character and credit of the persons who delivered those writings to them in the name of any of the apostles,* and many other indubitable proofs, both external and internal, to convince them of their being genuine, or to discover the falsehood, if they were not. Allowing, for instance, the epistles which now pass under the name of Saint Paul, to have been received during his life by the churches to which they were directed; there are in all of them many circumstances, by which they might certainly have known him to be the author. These circumstances the reader, if he has either received or written any letters of business to or from his acquaintance and friends, may easily suggest to himself, and may as easily discover them upon perusing those epistles. But it will—nay, it must—be said by those who deny these Scriptures to have been written by the apostles whose names they bear, that they were forged after their deaths, and consequently could not have been received by the churches during their lives. This, doubtless, infidels will say, (for what else can they pretend?) But I am at a loss to think how they can support their assertion, since not only the testimony of all the earliest writers of the Church, but common sense itself, is against them. For can it be imagined that the Corinthians, for example, would have

* The reader who is inclined to see the authorities upon which these several articles were founded, may consult Whitby's Prefaces to the Gospels, &c.

† These six are Matthew, John, Peter, Paul, James, and Jude. Mark and Luke, though supposed with good reason to be of the number of the seventy-two disciples, were not apostles, in the strict and limited sense of that word.

* Thus Tychicus, mentioned by Saint Paul in his epistle to the Ephesians, as sent by him, and most probably the bearer of that epistle, and of that to the Colossians, (iv. 7—9,) where he is also mentioned as sent to them by that apostle, together with Onesimus,—Tychicus, I say, and Onesimus, were doubtless able to give such proofs of Saint Paul's being the author of those two epistles, as the Christians of those nations must have been satisfied with, could it be supposed that they wanted other reasons to convince them of it; but this supposition, I believe, no one will think it reasonable to make.

received as genuine an epistle, not delivered to them till after the death of the apostle whose name it bore; and yet appearing, from many circumstances therein mentioned, to have been written several years before; unless such an extraordinary delay was very satisfactorily accounted for? Is it not to be presumed, that in a matter of such importance, not only to themselves, but to all Christians, they would have demanded of the person, who first produced it, How he came by it? How he knew it was written by Saint Paul, and addressed to them? Why it was not sent at the time it was written, especially as it was evident, upon the face of the epistle itself, that it was written upon occasion of some disturbances and irregularities crept into that Church, and in answer to some questions proposed to that apostle, which required a speedy reformation and reply? These questions, and many more, which the particulars referred to in the epistle must have suggested, the Corinthians would in common prudence have asked; and if the impostor could not (as it is most reasonable to conclude he could not) return a satisfactory answer to those questions; can we believe the Corinthians would have admitted, upon his bare word, or even upon probable presumptions, an epistle, which, if they acknowledged it to have been written by Saint Paul, they must thenceforward have regarded as the infallible rule of their faith and practice? This is supposing that the first Christians (as their candid adversaries are indeed apt to suppose) acted with much less wisdom and circumspection, than any man would now act upon any momentous affair in ordinary life. And let it not be forgotten that Christianity, at its first appearance in the world, very deeply affected the temporal concerns of its professors. The profession of Christianity did not then, as it does now in some parts of the world, entitle men to, and qualify them for honours and preferments. Christians, upon barely confessing themselves such, were many times, without any crime alleged, put immediately to death; all the advantages they reaped from a life of faith and virtue, were the peace of a quiet conscience here, and the hopes of a blessed immortality hereafter. The professing Christianity therefore was a matter of temporal deliberation. And why is it more reasonable to imagine that the people of those ages would give up all their worldly views and interests, without being convinced that it was worth their while to do it, than it is to imagine that a man in his senses, either of this or any past age, would, without a valuable consideration, surrender his estate to a stranger, and leave himself a beggar? I say this to those people who seem to consider all the primitive Christians either as fools or knaves, enthusiasts or impostors, without being able to assign any reason for their opinion, but that there have been fools and knaves, enthusiasts and impostors, among the professors of all religions whatsoever. But in order to prove a man a fool, or an enthusiast, for embracing this or that religion, it will be necessary to shew, in the first place, that he took up his faith without duly examining the principles or facts upon which it is founded, that his faith was not properly deducible from those facts or principles, or that those principles and facts were in themselves absurd and false. These points, I say, are not to be presumed, but proved. And with regard to the question now under consideration, unless it is proved by positive and undeniable evidence, that the Scriptures upon which the Christians, who lived immediately after the times of the apostles, built their faith, were either forged, or falsified, (that is, forged in part,) it cannot, I apprehend, be fairly concluded, that they acted like fools or madmen, in forsaking all, and "taking up the cross of Christ." Let this point be once proved, and it will readily be allowed that they took up their faith without due examination; since it must be owned that if we, at this distance, are able to discover the forgery, they, who lived at the very time when those writings first appeared, could not have wanted the means of detecting it, had they thought proper to make use of them. For as it is evident from the testimonies of the oldest Christian writers, some of whom lived very near the times of the apostles themselves, that these Scriptures were cited, read, and generally received as genuine, by the Christians of their age, and even before, they must have been forged, either in the lifetime of the apostles, or very soon after their deaths. That they were forged, and generally received as authentic, while the apostles were yet living, nobody, I imagine, will venture to assert, who considers the many circumstances and facts therein related, concerning the apostles themselves, and numberless other people then living; any one of which being falsified, must have utterly destroyed the pretence of their having been composed by an apostle, whom some of those Scriptures affirmed to have been under the guidance and inspiration of the Spirit of truth. If they were forged and published soon after the deaths of the apostles, there was still great danger of the fraud's being detected, if not by many living witnesses, yet by such a tradition of facts and doctrines, whether oral or written, as, if it had been found to clash with that supposed gospel or epistle, must have rendered its authenticity suspected, unless supported by better evidence than the bare name of an apostle prefixed to it. And if it could be supposed that the bare name of an apostle was, in those times, of weight sufficient to establish the authority of any writing, though otherwise liable to sus-

picion; how came it to pass that those cunning impostors, who wrote the Gospels of Mark and Luke, did not publish them under the venerable and all-sanctifying names of the apostles? If these Scriptures, therefore, were forged and published in either of the above mentioned periods, (and for the reasons before given, the forgery could not have been of a later date,) it is highly improbable, that the imposture should have escaped detection; and had it been detected, it is equally improbable, that Christians, who staked their all upon the truth of the gospel, should receive as genuine, and acknowledge as divinely inspired, writings, which were known or even suspected to be forged. But it will perhaps be urged, that the cheat was discovered and known only by a few of the wiser sort, who, for the advancement of a good cause, thinking it at least a venial sin, a fraud which might even be styled pious, to impose upon their weaker brethren, recommended to them, under the name of an apostle, a religious treatise, which tended only to improve their piety and strengthen their faith. But this supposition will appear as groundless and improbable as any of the former, if it be considered, that the abettors, as well as the authors of the forgery, must have been Christians, (Christians, I mean, as contradistinguished from Jews, heathens, and heretics,) and men of capacities and knowledge superior to the vulgar. As Christians they could not, in those ages of persecution, have any worldly interest in promoting the cause of Christianity, and therefore could have no motive to induce them to impose upon their brethren, but a persuasion that it was lawful, at least, to "do evil, that good might come of it,"—a principle which, as men of parts and knowledge, they could not but be sensible was unworthy of a disciple of the Lord of truth and righteousness, and which is expressly condemned in the epistle to the Romans, (Rom. iii. 8,) which epistle therefore cannot be supposed to have been forged by men who acknowledged that principle and proceeded upon it. Besides, as far the greater number of the books of Scripture contain facts, as well as precepts and doctrines, these impostors, however well-intentioned, could not be assured that their imposture would not turn more to the prejudice than advantage of Christianity; since, though they might think themselves secure in the acquiescence of their weaker brethren, and the fidelity of their partners in the fraud, they had reason to apprehend the zeal and abilities of their open and avowed enemies, heathens, Jews, and heretics, who, wanting neither the means nor inclination to examine the principles of a religion which with their utmost power they endeavoured to subvert, might very probably discover their imposture, and would certainly take every advantage, which such a discovery could furnish them with, of decrying a religion which they might then with some colour have suggested, could not be maintained without fraud. This danger, which, with the same penetration that enabled them to discover a cheat that had passed upon the vulgar, they must undoubtedly have foreseen, would, it may be supposed, have checked their zeal, and rendered them cautious how they ventured upon an imposture the success of which was so very precarious.

Since, therefore, no motive can be assigned of force sufficient to induce any Christians of those times, either to contrive or support a forgery of this kind; since, had any of those Scriptures attributed to the apostles, and especially the Epistles of Saint Paul, been forged and published so early as the writings of the most ancient fathers shew them to have been known and received, it is next to impossible that the fraud should have escaped detection; and since the Christians of those ages must, in consequence of such a detection, have necessarily disowned and rejected those Scriptures as spurious; may we not, from their having acknowledged them as authentic, conclude, for the several reasons above given, that the apostles and evangelists were the undoubted authors of the writings now received under their names?

But allowing the Christians of those early ages to have been able to discover the genuine works of the apostles from any spurious writings forged in their names, and allowing those books now received into the canon of the Holy Scriptures to have been written by those authors whose names they bear, it may be demanded how we at this time can be assured, that, among the great number which have since been ascribed to them, they wrote only these? or that in such a succession of ages, these are come down to us pure and uncorrupted? To the first of these questions I answer, that as the Christians of those early ages must be acknowledged for competent judges of the authority of any books or writings ascribed to the apostles, such book or writing, as they allowed to be genuine, hath an indisputable title to that character. But to this title, no other writings ascribed to the apostles, besides those now received into the canon of Scripture, can pretend; since of most of them, especially the false gospels, we find no mention till the fourth century.

For an answer to the second question, I shall refer the learned reader to Dr Whitby's "Examen Variantium Lectionum D. Millii,"* published at the end of his second volume of Annotations on the New Testament, where he will find, that the various readings, upon which the adversaries of Christianity (among whom I reckon the clergy of the Church of Rome) have laid so great a stress, will be of

* See Whitby's Prefatory Discourse to the Four Gospels.

little service to their cause; the greatest part of them being absolutely insignificant, and "none of them," saith that learned writer, "either changing or corrupting any article of faith, or rule of life."

And although, considering the great length of time that is past since the Scriptures were written, and the number of copies and translations that have been made of them, it is no wonder that many errors should have crept into them, either from the ignorance or inadvertency of transcribers and translators, all of which have helped to swell the sum of various readings; yet, considering, on the other hand, the number of heresies that have sprung up in every age of Christianity, all of which pretended to derive their opinions from the Scriptures—considering also the watchfulness of the Jews and heathens, those avowed enemies of the gospel, who, as appears from their writings, were no strangers to the Scriptures—it would be a still greater wonder that any material alteration should have been made in them; since whoever had attempted any such alteration, whether Christian, heretic, Jew, or heathen, could not but know it was impossible that it should escape the observation of so many eyes, as were continually prying, though with different views, into these important writings. And this seems to me the only reason of their having passed uncorrupted through the treacherous hands of the Church of Rome, who had them so long in her keeping. She was restrained from altering the Scriptures, by the fear of being detected by the Eastern Churches, who disowned her authority; and yet there is little question to be made that she would have done it, had she not fallen upon that less dangerous, though more absurd expedient, of locking them up from the laity, and assuming to herself the sole right of expounding them; a right which she hath asserted and maintained with all the artifices and cruelty that fraud and tyranny could invent. This expedient, however, though it hath hitherto preserved Popery, hath saved the Scriptures, and with them Christianity. For, considering the duration, extent, and absoluteness of her power in the West, had she altered the text of Scripture, according to the comments she has made upon it, Christians (could there have been any really such at this time, and in these parts of the world) must have been reduced to contend with the Church of Rome, not *from* the Scriptures, but *for* the Scriptures themselves. And what advantages infidelity and scepticism would have had in the meantime, is easy to imagine; since they are bold enough to dispute even now the genuineness of those Scriptures, which the very persons, whose doctrines are the most opposite to them, have been necessitated to acknowledge and maintain.

Sect. XXIV.—I am now to consider what arguments can be offered to induce us to give credit to the testimony of the apostles and evangelists.

Two qualities are requisite to establish the credit of a witness, namely, a perfect knowledge of the fact he gives testimony to, and a fair and unblemished character.

After what has been said in the preceding parts of this discourse concerning the evidences of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, it will, I hope, be granted, that the apostles were duly qualified to be witnesses, in point of knowledge of the fact which they are brought to give testimony to. It remains, then, that we inquire into their characters, which may very clearly be collected from the tenor of their lives and conduct as preachers of the gospel, and the purity of the doctrines they taught; not to insist in favour of them upon the conclusion which may be drawn from their very enemies not having been able to fix upon them any stain or blemish, which they themselves have not acknowledged and lamented.

Their lives, then, after they had embraced Christianity, were not only irreproachable, but holy; and their conduct, as preachers of the gospel, disinterested, noble, and generous, in the most exalted degree. For they not only quitted their houses, their lands, their occupations, their friends, kindred, parents, wives, and children, but their countries also, every pursuit, and every endearment of life, in order to propagate, with infinite labour, through innumerable difficulties, and with the utmost danger, in every corner of the known world, the salvation of mankind; certain of meeting, in every new region, with new enemies and opposers; and yet requiring of those who, through their preaching, were become their friends and brethren, nothing but a bare subsistence; and sometimes labouring with their own hands, to save them even from that light and reasonable burden; disclaiming for themselves all authority, pre-eminence, and power; and teaching those ignorant and superstitious people, who, taking them for Gods, would have worshipped them, and sacrificed to them, that they were men like themselves, and servants of that one God, to whom alone worship was due. Would impostors, who are most commonly interested, vain-glorious, and ambitious, have acted in this manner? No certainly; but it may be said, enthusiasts would. Be it so. But how can it be made appear that the apostles were enthusiasts? If Christ did not rise from the dead, most assuredly he did not preach to them after his crucifixion: upon which supposition, I apprehend it will be very difficult to account for their returning to their faith in that master, whom, in his distress, they had abandoned and disowned. But if Christ did rise from the dead, and did, after his resurrec-

tion, converse with his apostles, I suppose it will be easily granted, that they had sufficient reason for believing in him, and for acting in obedience to the command given them by him, to preach the gospel throughout the world, especially when they found themselves so well qualified for that important commission, by the miraculous powers conferred upon them by the Holy Ghost, and particularly the gift of tongues, so apparently and so wisely calculated to carry on that great, that universal service. If this, I say, was the case, then surely the apostles were no enthusiasts, since they neither believed themselves without reasonable proof, nor pretended to inspiration and a divine commission, without being able to give to others sufficient evidences of both.*

Of all the admirably pure and truly divine doctrines taught by the apostles, I shall consider only two, as more peculiarly relative to the present argument; and they are, the belief of a judgment to come, and the obligation of speaking truth. That God will judge the world by Jesus Christ is a necessary article of the Christian faith; and as such, is strongly and frequently inculcated in the writings of the apostles and evangelists, of which it is needless to produce instances. And that Christians were required by these preachers of holiness to speak truth upon all occasions, the following texts will clearly evince. In Ephes. iv. 25, the apostle commands that, "putting away lying, they speak every man truth with his neighbour." And again, Colos. iii. 9, "Lie not one to another." Nay, that even the man who lies through zeal for the glory of God, is, according to their estimation, to be accounted a sinner, may be inferred from these words in Rom. iii. 7, 8, "If the truth of God hath more abounded through my lie unto his glory, why yet am I also judged as a sinner? And not rather, as we be slanderously reported, and as some affirm that we say, Let us do evil that good may come? whose damnation is just." That the apostles themselves were fully persuaded of these two propositions nobody can deny, who will call to mind that they chose to suffer persecution, and death itself, rather than not "speak the things which they had seen and heard;" and that, "if in this life only they had hope, they were of all men the most miserable." Now, that any men, who firmly believed that God would punish them for speaking an untruth, though for the advancement of a good cause, should, at the hazard of their lives, and without any prospect of gain, or advantage, assert facts, which at the same time they knew to be false; should, for instance, affirm, that they saw and conversed with Jesus Christ after his resurrection, knowing or believing that he was not risen from the dead, and yet expect to be judged hereafter by that very same Jesus, is too improbable to gain credit with any, but those great believers of absurdities, the infidels and sceptics.

Sect. XXV.—But besides the many infallible tokens and evidences of the integrity of the apostles and evangelists, that may be collected from their lives and doctrines, there are also in their writings several internal marks of their veracity: some of which I shall now endeavour to point out, confining myself to such parts of their writings as belong to the present subject.

The contradictions and inconsistencies which some imagine they have discovered in the evangelical accounts of the resurrection, have been urged as arguments for setting aside the authority, and rejecting the evidence of the gospels. But these supposed contradictions having been considered in the foregoing parts of this discourse; and having, upon a close inspection, and comparing the several narratives with each other, been shewn to be shadowy and imaginary, and to lie no deeper than the superficies and surface of the words: we need not be afraid of admitting these appearances of inconsistency; since from them it may be inferred, to the advantage of the evangelists, that they did not write in concert. For had they agreed together upon giving an account of the resurrection of Christ, and each of them taken, by allotment, his several portion of that history, it is probable they would somewhere or other have dropt some intimations that the particulars omitted by them were supplied by others; and that such and such parts of their narrations were to be connected with such and such facts, related by their brethren; or they would have distinguished the several incidents by such strong and visible marks, and circumstances of time and place, &c. as might have been sufficient, at first sight, to discover their order, and keep them from being confounded with each other: some, or all of these things, I say, they would probably have done, had they written in concert. And doubtless they would, nay, they must have written in concert, had they endeavoured to impose upon the world a "cunningly devised fable;" and had they not trusted to the truth, and notoriety of the facts they related. Truth, like honesty, oftentimes neglects appearances. Hypocrisy and imposture are always guarded. And as from these seeming discordances in their accounts, we may conclude they did not write in concert, so from their agreeing in the principal and most material facts, we may infer that they wrote after the truth.† In Xiphilin and Theodosius, the two abbreviators of Dio Cassius, may be observed the like

* See Mr Locke's Chapter on Enthusiasm.

† Vide Dio Cas. Hist. Edit. Leunclav. Fol. Hanov. 1606

agreement and disagreement; the one taking notice of many particulars, which the other passes over in silence, and both of them relating the chief and most remarkable events. And as, from their both frequently making use of the very same words and expression when they speak of the same thing, it is apparent that they copied from the same original; so I believe nobody was ever absurd enough to imagine that the particulars mentioned by the one, were not taken out of Dio Cassius, merely because they are omitted by the other. And still more absurd would it be to say, as some have lately done of the evangelists, that the facts related by Theodosius are contradicted by Xiphilin, because the latter says nothing of them. But against the evangelists, it seems that all kinds of arguments may not only be employed but applauded. The case, however, of the sacred historians is exactly parallel to that of these two abbreviators. The latter extracted the particulars related in their several abridgments from the history of Dio Cassius, as the former drew the materials of their gospels from the life of Jesus Christ. The two last transcribed their relations from a certain collection of facts contained in one and the same history; the four first from a certain collection of facts contained in the life of one and the same person, laid before them by that Spirit, which was to lead them into all truth; and why the fidelity of the four transcribers should be called in question for reasons which hold equally strong against the two who are not suspected, I leave those to determine who lay such a weight upon this objection.

Another mark of the veracity of the evangelists appears in their naming the time, the scene of action, the actors, and the witnesses, of most of the facts mentioned by them; which I shall give a remarkable instance of in one relating to the present subject, the resurrection; namely, the guarding the sepulchre of Christ. The time was that of the celebration of the passover, the most solemn festival of the Jews; the scene was in Jerusalem, the metropolis of Judea; and at that time crowded with Jews, who came thither from all parts of the earth to keep the Passover: the actors and witnesses were the chief priests and elders, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, and the Roman soldiers who guarded the sepulchre. Now, if the story of guarding the sepulchre had been false, it is not to be doubted but the chief priests and elders, who are said to have obtained the guard, and sealed the door of the sepulchre, would by some authentic act have cleared themselves of the folly and guilt imputed to them by the evangelist, who charges the chief priests with having bribed the soldiers to tell not only a lie, but an absurd lie, that carried its own confutation with it; the soldiers, with confessing a breach of discipline, that by the military law was punishable with death; and the governor, with the suspicion at least of being capable of overlooking so heinous a crime, at the instigation of the chief priests, &c. All these several charges upon the whole government of Judea, might have been answered at once by an attestation from the chief priests, setting forth that they never demanded a guard to be set at the sepulchre, confirmed by the testimony of all the Roman officers and soldiers (many of whom were probably at Jerusalem when this gospel was written) denying that they were ever upon that guard. This not only the reputation of the chief priests, but their avowed malice to Christ, and aversion to his doctrine and religion, required; and this, even upon the supposition of the story of guarding the sepulchre being true, they would probably have done, had they been at liberty to propagate and invent what lie they pleased: but that a guard was set at the sepulchre, was in all likelihood, by the dispersion and flight of the soldiers into the city, too well known in Jerusalem for them to venture at denying it; for which reason, as I have before observed, they were obliged to invent a lie consistent with that known fact, however absurd and improbable it might appear when it came to be considered and examined. Now, as the report put into the mouths of the Roman soldiers by the chief priests and elders, is no proof of the falsehood of this fact, but rather of the contrary, so does the naming the time, the scene, the actors, and the witnesses, form a very strong presumption of its being true, since no forger of lies willingly and wittingly furnishes out the means of his own detection; especially when we consider that this story is related by that evangelist, who is said to have written nearest the time, and to have composed his gospel for those Christians who dwelt in Judea, many of whom then living were probably at Jerusalem when this thing was done.

The strict attachment and regard to truth of all the evangelists is farther manifested, in their relating of themselves and their brethren many things that, in the opinion of the world, could not but turn much to their dishonour and discredit. Such as their denying and deserting their master in his extremity, and their dulness in not understanding his predictions about his rising from the dead, though expressed in the plainest and most intelligible words. A man's confession against himself or his friends, is generally presumed to be true. If the evangelists, therefore, be allowed to be the authors of those gospels which bear their names, or if those writings are supposed to have been forged by some friends to Christianity, they must, in these instances at least, be acknowledged to relate

the truth, till some other good reason, besides that of their attachment to the truth, can be assigned for their inserting such disgraceful and dishonourable accounts of themselves and their friends.

But there is nothing that sets the veracity of the sacred writers so much above all question and suspicion, as what they tell us about the low condition, the infirmities, the sufferings, and the death of the great author and finisher of their faith, Christ Jesus. He hungered, they say, he was poor, so poor as not to "have where to lay his head;" he wept, he hid himself for fear of the Jews who sought to kill him; and when his hour drew nigh, he was dejected, sorrowful, "exceeding sorrowful, even unto death:" he prayed that the cup of affliction, which was then mixing for him, might, if possible, pass from him. And though he was "strengthened by an angel from heaven," yet, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." After this he was seized like a common malefactor, abandoned by all his followers and friends, led bound, first to Annas, then to Caiaphas, then to Pilate, then to Herod, then back again to Pilate; and lastly, after enduring a thousand insults and indignities, after having been buffeted, spit upon, and scourged, was carried to suffer upon the cross the infamous and painful death of offending slaves, and the vilest criminals. And yet this hungry, houseless, suffering, dying Jesus, is by the same writers said to have fed a multitude of many thousands with five loaves and two fishes; to have commanded the fish of the sea to provide him money to pay the tribute; to have been ministered unto by angels; to have been obeyed by the winds and seas; to have had in himself, and to have imparted to his disciples, authority over unclean spirits, and the power of healing all manner of diseases; to have raised the dead by a touch, a word; to have been able to have obtained from God, whom he called his Father, an army of more than twelve legions of angels, a force sufficient, not only to have rescued him from the sufferings and death he deprecated, but to have acquired him the empire of the world; and lastly, as an instance of his being endued with a power superior even to destruction itself, he is said to have risen from the dead; to have ascended into heaven, and to sit down for ever at the right hand of God. From these accounts it is plain, that the character of Jesus Christ, as drawn up by the evangelists, is a mixture of such seeming inconsistencies, so wonderful a composition of weakness and power, humiliation and glory, humanity and divinity, that as no mere mortal could pretend to come up to it, so the wit of man would never have conceived and proposed such a one for the founder of any sect or religion. The sufferings and cross of Christ were, as Saint Paul confesses, to the Jews a stumbling-block, and foolishness to the Greeks. The Jews, it is well known, expected a temporal deliverer, an earthly prince, a glorious conquering Messiah; and were therefore so scandalized at the low condition and abject fortune of Jesus, so ill-proportioned, as they imagined, to the sublime character of the Son of God, that upon account of those human blemishes only, they rejected all the miraculous evidences of his divine mission, and put him to death as a blasphemer for taking upon him the name, without the temporal splendour and power of the Messiah. That the disciples of Jesus were tainted with the like prejudices with their unbelieving brethren the Jews, is very natural to believe, and may be certainly collected from the writings of the evangelists, from whom we learn, that when, convinced by his miracles, his doctrine, and his life, they had acknowledged him to be the Messiah, they were so offended at what he told them of his sufferings and death, that they refused to believe him, and "Peter took him, and began to rebuke him, saying, Be it far from thee, Lord; this shall not be unto thee," (Matt. xvi. 22.) The despicable condition, the sufferings and death of Christ, being admitted, I think it impossible to give one probable reason for supposing that the apostles and the evangelists invented the other more than human part of his character. Had he wrought no miracles, had he not risen from the dead, their religious prejudices, as they were Jews, must have withheld them for ever from acknowledging him for their Messiah; and yet it is notorious, that not only they themselves acknowledged him as such, but endeavoured to persuade their unbelieving brethren, that "God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ." This was the great article, the foundation stone, upon which the whole superstructure of Christianity was raised; and to prove this article, they appeal to his miracles, as so many evidences of his divine mission. But here *modern* unbelievers (for Celsus, who lived nearest those times, admits all the miracles of Christ, but imputes them to his skill in magic) come in with their suspicions, and pretend to call in question the accounts given us of these miracles in the evangelists; which, without any proof, they are pleased to take for forgeries: in answer to which, (not to insist upon the improbability that any man, or any set of men in their senses, should venture to appeal to their enemies for the truth of facts, which they themselves knew to be false, especially when those enemies had not only the means of detecting them, but the inclination and power to punish

them for their impostures: not to insist, I say, upon this topic, nor upon that which I just now mentioned, of its being impossible to assign any motive that could induce them to be guilty of such a forgery,) I shall only observe, that allowing them to have been so shameless and so wicked as to invent and propagate a set of lies in order to get credit to their master and his religion, it is strange they should not go one step farther, and suppress, at least, if not deny, his infirmities, his sufferings, and his crucifixion, and so remove that stumbling-block, which they could not but know would be the greatest obstacle to the advancement of their religion, as well among the Gentiles as the Jews. But it will be urged, perhaps, that his sufferings and his crucifixion were too public to be denied; and so, say the evangelists, were most of his miracles: and this undoubtedly was the reason why they were acknowledged by Celsus. To suppose therefore that the evangelists, for fear of being detected, would confess truths, which manifestly prejudiced their great design of propagating the faith in Christ Jesus, and yet would not by the same fear of detection be restrained from relating untruths, because they might imagine them to be advantageous to their cause, is no mark of equity and candour, but of partiality and prejudice. But it will possibly be said, (for what will not infidels *say*? and I will add, how strange soever it may sound, what will they not *believe*?) that the Scriptures were forged long after the events recorded in them, and consequently, long after all the evidences of their truth or falsehood were extinct or lost. In answer to this, it may be again demanded, as in the case of the evangelists, How came these late forgers to choose the suffering crucified Jesus for the author of their religion? And why, since they were at liberty to say what they pleased, without any apprehension of being discovered, why, I say, did they relate such things both of him and his disciples, as, in the opinion of the world, could not fail of discrediting the faith they preached in his name, and by an authority pretended to be derived from him and his disciples? But, without entering upon these considerations, it may be sufficient barely to deny this charge, till they who insist upon it shall be able to make it good, by shewing, either from authentic testimonies, or even probable and presumptive arguments, when they were forged? by whom? and to what end? Till they are able to do this, (which I will venture to pronounce will never be,) we have a right to insist, for the reasons above given, that the Scriptures of the New Testament were written by those whose names they bear, and that all the facts related in them are most unquestionably true.

Before I quit this subject, I cannot forbear taking notice of one other mark of integrity which appears in all the compositions of the sacred writers, and particularly the evangelists, and that is, the simple, unaffected, unornamental and unostentatious manner in which they deliver truths so important and sublime, and facts so magnificent and wonderful, as are capable, one would think, of lighting up a flame of oratory, even in the dullest and coldest breasts. They speak of an angel descending from heaven to foretell the miraculous conception of Jesus, of another proclaiming his birth attended by a "multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men;" of his star appearing in the east; of angels ministering to him in the wilderness; of his glory in the mount; of a voice twice heard from heaven, saying "This is my beloved Son;" of innumerable miracles performed by him, and by his disciples in his name; of his knowing the thoughts of men; of his foretelling future events; of prodigies and wonders accompanying his crucifixion and death; of an angel descending in terrors, opening his sepulchre, and frighting away the soldiers, who were set to guard it; of his rising from the dead, ascending into heaven, and pouring down, according to his promise, the various and miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit upon his apostles and disciples. All these amazing incidents do these inspired historians relate nakedly and plainly, without any of the colourings and heightenings of rhetoric, or so much as a single note of admiration; without making any comment or remark upon them, or drawing from them any conclusion in honour either of their master or themselves, or to the advantage of the religion they preached in his name; but contenting themselves with relating the naked truth, whether it seems to make for them or against them; without either magnifying on the one hand, or palliating on the other, they leave their cause to the unbiassed judgment of mankind, seeking, like genuine apostles of the Lord of truth, to convince rather than to persuade; and therefore, coming as Saint Paul speaks of his own preaching, "not with excellency of speech, not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit, and of power, that," adds he, "your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God," (1 Cor. ii. 1, 4, 5.) And let it be remembered that he who speaks this, wanted not learning, art, or eloquence, as is evident from his speeches recorded in the Acts of the Apostles, and from the testimony of that critic Longinus, who, reckoning up the Grecian orators, places among them Paul of Tarsus;* and surely, had they been left solely to the suggestions and guidance of human wisdom, they would not have failed to

* Vide Long. Frag. Edit. Pearce.

lay hold on such topics, as the wonders of their master's life, and the transcendent purity and perfection of the noble, generous, benevolent morality contained in his precepts, furnished them with. These topics, I say, greater than ever Tully, or Demosthenes, or Plato, were possessed of, mere human wisdom would doubtless have prompted them to make use of, in order to recommend in the strongest manner the religion of Christ Jesus to mankind, by turning their attention to the divine part of his character, and hiding as it were in a blaze of heavenly light and glory, his infirmities, his sufferings, and his death. And had they upon such topics as these, and in such a cause, called in to their assistance all arts of composition, rhetoric, and logic, who would have blamed them for it? Not those persons, I presume, who, dazzled and captivated with the glittering ornaments of human wisdom, make a mock at the simplicity of the gospel, and think it wit to ridicule the style and language of the Holy Scriptures. But the all-wise Spirit of God, by whom these sacred writers were guided into all truth, thought fit to direct or permit them to proceed in a different method,—a method, however, very analogous to that in which he hath been pleased to reveal himself to us in the great book of nature, the stupendous frame of the universe; all whose wonders he hath judged it sufficient to lay before us in silence, and expects from our observations the proper comments and deductions which, having endued us with reason, he hath enabled us to make. And though a careless and superficial spectator may fancy he perceives even in this fair volume many inconsistencies, defects, and superfluities; yet to a diligent, unprejudiced, and rational inquirer, who will take the pains to examine the laws, consider and compare the several parts, and regard their use and tendency, with reference to the whole design of this amazing structure, as far as his short abilities can carry him, there will appear, in those instances which he is capable of knowing, such evident characters of wisdom, goodness, and power, as will leave him no room to doubt of their author, or to suspect that in those particulars which he hath not examined, or to a thorough knowledge of which he cannot perhaps attain, there is nothing but folly, weakness, and malignity. The same thing may be said of the written book,—that second volume (if I may so speak) of the revelation of God, the Holy Scriptures. For as in the first, so also in this are there many passages, that to a cursory unobserving reader appear idle, unconnected, unaccountable, and inconsistent with those marks of truth, wisdom, justice, mercy, and benevolence, which in others are so visible, that the most careless and inattentive cannot but discern them. And even these, many of them at least, will often be found, upon a closer and stricter examination, to accord and coincide with the other more plain, and more intelligible passages, and to be no heterogeneous parts of one and the same wise and harmonious composition. In both, indeed, in the natural as well as the moral book of God, there are, and ever will be, many difficulties, which the wit of man may never be able to resolve; but will a wise philosopher, because he cannot comprehend every thing he sees, reject for that reason all the truths that lie within his reach, and let a few inexplicable difficulties overbalance the many plain and infallible evidences of the finger of God, which appear in all parts, both of his created and written works? Or will he presume so far upon his own wisdom, as to say, God ought to have expressed himself more clearly? The point and exact degree of clearness, which will equally suit the different capacities of men in different ages and countries, will, I believe, be found more difficult to fix than is imagined; since what is clear to one man in a certain situation of mind, time, and place, will inevitably be obscure to another, who views it in other positions, and under other circumstances. How various and even contradictory are the readings and comments, which several men, in the several ages and climates of the world, have made upon nature! And yet her characters are equally legible, and her laws equally intelligible in all times and in all places; "there is no speech nor language where her voice is not heard." Her "sound is gone out through all the earth, and her words to the ends of the world." All these misinterpretations, therefore, and misconstructions of her works, are chargeable only upon mankind, who have set themselves to study them with various degrees of capacity, application, and impartiality. The question then should be, Why hath God given men such various talents? and not, Why hath not God expressed himself more clearly? And the answer to this question, as far as it concerns man to know, is, that God will require of him according to what he hath, and not according to what he hath not. If what is necessary for all to know, is knowable by all, those men, upon whom God hath been pleased to bestow capacities and faculties superior to the vulgar, have certainly no just reason to complain of his having left them materials for the exercise of those talents, which, if all things were equally plain to all men, would be of no great advantage to the possessors. If, therefore, there are in the sacred writings, as well as in the works of nature, many passages hard to be understood, it were to be wished that the wise and learned, instead of being offended at them, and teaching others to be so too, would be persuaded that both God and man expect that they would set themselves to consider

and examine them carefully and impartially, and with a sincere desire of discovering and embracing the truth, not with an arrogant unphilosophical conceit of their being already sufficiently wise and knowing. And then I doubt not but most of those objections to revelation, which are now urged with the greatest confidence, would be cleared up and removed, like those formerly made to creation, and the being and providence of God, by those most ignorant, most absurd, and yet most self-sufficient pretenders to reason and philosophy, the atheists and sceptics.

Sect. XXVI. — To these internal evidences of the veracity (and may I not add inspiration) of the apostles and evangelists, I shall beg leave to subjoin two external proofs of great weight in an inquiry into the reasons we have for giving credit to their testimony, the one negative, the other positive.

The negative proof is contained in this proposition, namely, that out of the great number of facts related by the sacred writers, public and extraordinary as they are said to have been, not one, in the course of now almost seventeen hundred years, hath ever been disproved or falsified. Denied, indeed, many of them have been, and still are; but there is a great deal of difference between denying and disproving. To prove a fact to be false, it is necessary that the positive and probable evidence brought against it should overbalance that produced in support of it. In opposition to the testimony of the disciples of Jesus Christ, asserting that he was risen from the dead, the chief priests and elders of the Jews affirmed, that his disciples stole away his body, and then gave out that he was risen; in maintenance of which charge they produced, as Saint Matthew tells us, (xxviii. 13,) the Roman soldiers, who were set to guard the sepulchre, who deposed that "his disciples came by night and stole him away while they slept." Not to insist again upon the absurdity of this report, as it stands in the evangelist, and taking it as it was afterwards prudently amended by the Sanhedrim, * and propagated by an express deputation from them to all the synagogues of the Jews throughout the world, in which, without making any mention of the Roman guard, they say no more than that the disciples came by night, and stole away the body; taking it, I say, in the manner in which those wise counsellors were, upon mature deliberation, pleased to put it, it may be sufficient to observe, that this theft charged upon the disciples, was so far from being proved, that it was not so much as ever inquired into. And yet the accusers were the chief priests and elders of the Jews; men in high reverence and authority with the people, vested with all the power of the state, and consequently furnished with all the means of procuring information, and of gaining or extorting a confession. And what were the accused? men of low birth, mean fortunes, without learning, without credit, without support; and who out of pusillanimity and fear had deserted their master, upon the first occasion offered of shewing their fidelity and attachment to him. And can it be imagined that the chief priests and council would have made no inquiry into a fact, the belief of which they took so much pains to propagate, had they themselves been persuaded of the truth of it? And had they inquired into it, can it be supposed that out of such a number of mean persons as must have been privy to it, no one, either from honesty or religion, the fear of punishment or hope of reward, would have betrayed the secret, and given them such intelligence as might have enabled them to put the question of the resurrection out of all dispute? For had it been once proved that the disciples stole away the body of Jesus, their words would hardly have been taken for his resurrection. But how did these poor men act? Conscious of no fraud and imposture, they remained in Jerusalem a week or more, after the report of their having stolen their master's body was spread over the city, and in about a month returned thither again; not long after which they asserted boldly to the face of their powerful enemies and accusers, the chief priests and elders, that "God had raised from the dead that same Jesus whom they had crucified." And what was the behaviour of these learned rabbins, these watchful guardians of the Jewish church and state? Why, they suffered the disciples of Jesus, charged by their order with an imposture tending to disturb the government, to continue unquestioned at Jerusalem, and to depart from thence unmolested. And when, upon their return thither, they had caused them to be seized, and brought before them, for "preaching through Jesus the resurrection of the dead," (Acts, iv.) what did they say to them? Did they charge them with having stolen away the body of their master? Nothing like it. On the contrary, not being able to gainsay the testimony given by the apostles to the resurrection of Jesus, vouched by a miracle just then performed by them in his name, they ordered them to withdraw, and "conferred among themselves, saying, What shall we do to these men? for that indeed a notable miracle hath been done by them is manifest to all them that dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But that it spread no farther among the people, let us straitly threaten them, that they speak henceforth to no man in this name. And they called them, and commanded them not to speak at all, nor teach in the name of Jesus.

* Justin. Martyr. Dial. cum Tryph. Jud.

Peter and John answered, and said unto them, Whether it be right in the sight of God to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye; for we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard. So when they had farther threatened them, they let them go, finding nothing how they might punish them," (Acts, iv. 15—21.) Who, after hearing this account, could ever imagine that the disciples stole the body of Jesus? or that the chief priests and elders themselves believed they did? But it may perhaps be objected, that this account comes from Christian writers; and could the objectors expect to meet with it in Jewish authors? We might indeed expect to find in their writings some proofs of this charge upon the disciples; and had there been any, the chief priests, and the other adversaries of Christ, would doubtless not have failed to produce them. But the progress that Christianity made at that time in Jerusalem, is a stronger argument than even their silence, that no proof of this charge either was or could be made. Could the apostles have had the impudence to preach, and could so many thousand Jews have been weak enough to believe upon their testimony, that Christ was risen from the dead, had it been proved that his disciples stole away his body? An infidel may, if he pleases, believe this, but let him account for it if he can.

I have dwelt the longer upon the examination of this pretended theft of the disciples, because it is the *only fact* I know of, that hath been set up in opposition to the many facts upon which the evidence of the resurrection is founded. How defective it is in point of proof, whether probable or positive, I need not point out to the reader. But I cannot help observing, that those who deny that any guard was placed at the sepulchre, take from it the only positive evidence that was ever brought to support it, namely, the depositions of the Roman soldiers.

Among the many extraordinary particulars related by the sacred writers, the miracles performed by Christ and his apostles, as they were almost without number, and wrought most commonly in public, in the presence of unbelieving Jews and Gentiles, yielded the fairest occasion to the opposers of the gospel of overturning the credit of the evangelical historians. And yet the pitiful solutions, which Pagan and Jewish writers have been reduced to make use of, in order to take off the conclusion drawn from these miracles by the Christians, form a very strong presumption, that they were not to be disproved. Some, as Celsus, * have imputed them to magic; others, as the Jews, have attributed them to the ineffable name of God, which, say they, † Jesus stole out of the temple.

* See Origen contra Celsum.
† See Univ. Hist. vol. iv. p. 200. note T.

Both of them have admitted the facts. I shall not go about to shew the absurdity of either of those two ways of accounting for those miraculous operations. But I must hence take occasion to beg the reader to reflect a little upon the strange perverseness of the human mind, the vanity of reason, and the force of prejudice. Celsus believed magic, the Jews had faith in amulets; and yet both one and the other disbelieved Christianity!

Sect. XXVII.—The positive proof of the veracity of the sacred writers is founded on the exact accomplishment of the predictions of our Saviour and his apostles recorded in the New Testament.

That I may not draw out this article into an excessive and unnecessary length, I shall make no remarks upon those predictions, whose accomplishment is to be found in the Scriptures themselves; some of which I have already taken notice of. The Scriptures, infidels perhaps will say, were written after these events, and the predictions therefore probably adapted to them. But they who make this objection will gain little by it, since, if they admit the events, it will be no difficult matter to demonstrate the truth of Christianity. Besides, the reader himself may, with very little pains, find out and compare these predictions with their several completions.

The prophecies I shall produce, relate to the different states of the Jews and Gentiles, different not only from each other, but very different from that in which they both were at the time when these prophecies were written: to have a perfect understanding of which, it will be necessary to take a general view of the religious state (for that is principally regarded in these prophecies) of the nations distinguished by the names of Jews and Gentiles.

From the time of the covenant, or compact, which God was pleased to make with Abraham and his descendants, and to renew with the whole body of the Israelites under Moses, the Jews became the peculiar people of God,—a phrase sufficiently justified and explained by the terms or conditions of the covenant, which, on the part of the Israelites, were the taking God only for their Lord, and paying obedience to the law, the ceremonial as well as moral law, which he had given them. On the part of God, were stipulated temporal blessings, and his almighty protection to the Jews, as long as they should adhere to the conditions entered into by them. By virtue of this covenant, the Jews acknowledged God for their King, and God governed them as his subjects, by his deputies and viceroys, the prophets, judges, and kings of Israel. Moses, the mediator of this covenant, was the first of these deputies; and the Messiah, who was to

be the mediator of a new covenant, was to be the last. By him the new covenant was to be offered, first, indeed, to the Jews, with whom the covenant mediated by Moses was till then to be in force. But the other was not to be limited to that people only. The Gentiles, that is, all the nations of the earth, who were no parties to the former covenant, were to be invited to accede to this; and all those, of whatsoever nation they were, who should acknowledge the Messiah as a King appointed by God to reign over them, were to be admitted into this covenant, and be reputed thenceforward the people of God. But as the limits of this divine empire were to be altered and enlarged, it became necessary to alter and enlarge the terms of government. The ceremonial law was national and local: and though, without some such religious and political bond of union, the Jews would not in all probability have long continued the separate and peculiar people of God, yet, as most of the duties prescribed by that law were confined to the holy land, and even to the holy city of Jerusalem, the Gentiles, who were now to be taken into the covenant, could not possibly comply with it. This therefore was of necessity to be abolished. But the moral law, the basis and end of the former covenant, was in like manner to be the end and basis of the new one. To this both the Gentiles and Jews could pay obedience, as well as to the other terms superadded to it in the new covenant, namely, the acknowledging the Messiah for their King; and, as an outward token of their allegiance and accession to this covenant, receiving baptism, and commemorating from time to time, by the celebration of the Eucharist, the sealing this covenant on the part of God by the death of Christ. Which two sacraments, properly so called, may be styled the ceremonial law of the Christians, as circumcision and other ritual duties were of the Jews.

Of the twelve tribes of Israel, who were parties to the Mosaical covenant, ten fell at once from their allegiance to God under Jeroboam; and ceasing from that time to be the people or subjects of God, he ceased to be their King; and withdrawing his protection, suffered them to be carried into a captivity, from which they never afterwards returned; but, being lost and confounded with the nations among whom they were transplanted, were thenceforward no more heard of as a distinct and separate people. The two remaining tribes were then the only people of God; and as such, though often punished by him for their frequent transgressions of his laws, and even carried captive to Babylon, were, by his providence, brought back again to the land of Canaan, and restored to a capacity of complying with the terms of their covenant, by the rebuilding the city and temple of Jerusalem. From that time they were very exact in their observance of the ceremonial law, but had most grossly corrupted the moral law, and rendered it, as Christ told them, of no effect, by the comments and traditions of their scribes and pharisees. This was the state of the Jews, when Jesus the Messiah, that great Prophet and King foretold by Moses and all the prophets, came to offer them a new covenant.

The state of the Gentiles was far more deplorable. They had for many ages transferred their obedience from the one supreme God, Creator of heaven and earth, to his creatures, or to deities of their own devising; under whose imaginary protection they had ranged themselves by nations and communities; and had become, almost in the same sense as the Israelites were styled the people of God, the people of the Egyptian Isis, Assyrian Belus, Athenian Pallas, Ephesian Diana, and Capitolian Jove, &c. But there was this farther difference between them: the God of the Israelites, like a righteous and equitable sovereign, had given his people a law, to be the rule of their obedience, or rather, had confirmed and enforced that original law, which, from the very beginning, he had written in their hearts, that is, the reason of all mankind, adding to it such other institutions as their particular situation then required. While the Gentiles, having, by their idolatry, fallen from their obedience to that original universal law, were left thenceforward, like outlaws and rebels, to frame to themselves such rules, both moral and religious, as the fancied caprice of their deities, or their own perverted reason, should suggest; whence it came to pass, that they were overrun with immorality and superstition. And though some of the wisest among them, by following the yet glimmering light of reason, had become sensible of many of their grossest errors, and had endeavoured to reform some abuses, yet had superstition taken so strong a hold on the majority, that, till that was entirely rooted out, it was impossible to bring them back to what is called the religion of nature, that is, the religion of reason; were we to allow those wise men to have been as well acquainted with it, in all its branches, as, since Christianity, some have pretended to be. But with the superstition of their countries, those wise men thought it better to comply than to contend. And had they attacked it with the intrepidity and industry of the apostles, it is much to be questioned, whether, with all their eloquence and logic, they would have gained the victory. Such was the dark and hopeless condition of the Gentiles.

In this state of the Jews and Gentiles, our Saviour, after having represented to the former, under the parable of a "certain house-

holder who planted a vineyard, and let it out to husbandmen," (Matt. xxi. 33—44,) the righteous dealings of God to them, and the ill returns they had made to him, by not only refusing him the fruits, but murdering the servants he had sent to demand them, and lastly his Son; and after having extorted from them a confession that those wicked husbandmen ought to be miserably punished, and the vineyard taken from them, and given to "other husbandmen, who should render him the fruits in their season," spoke to them the following words:—"Did you never read in the Scriptures, The stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes? Therefore say I unto you, the kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof: and whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken; but on whomsoever it shall fall, it will grind him to powder." By these words are plainly signified, 1*st*, The transferring the kingdom of God from the Jews to the Gentiles; 2*dly*, The obedience of the Gentiles; and 3*dly*, The miserable punishment of the Jews, for their having rejected and murdered the Son of God. There are many other prophecies relating to each of these events scattered up and down the Gospels, which I think it needless to produce, this being so very full and explicit. I shall therefore set about shewing the exact accomplishment of it in its several parts.

The kingdom of God, as may be collected from what is said above, denotes the spiritual or moral dominion of God over moral subjects, that is, free agents; and by the people of God are signified such free agents as freely and voluntarily acknowledge the sovereignty of God, by worshipping him, and receiving and obeying all those laws, whether natural or revealed, which appear to have been enacted by him. The Jews, therefore, by rejecting Jesus Christ, who proved himself to have been commissioned and sent by God, not only from the testimony of Moses and all their prophets, the holiness of his life and doctrine, and the numberless miracles he wrought among them, but still more plainly, if possible, by his rising from the dead, and empowering his disciples to work the same mighty signs and wonders in his name; the Jews, I say, by rejecting this Messenger, this Son of God, and refusing to receive the laws which he proposed to them in his Father's name, evidently renounced their allegiance to God, and ceased to be his people or subjects. And the Gentiles, on the other hand, by renouncing their vices and idolatrous superstitions, returning to the worship of God, and receiving his Messiah, together with the laws proposed to them by him in the name of God, as evidently put themselves under the dominion of God, acknowledged his empire, and became the people or subjects of God. And hence appears what is meant by the kingdom of God being taken from the Jews and given to the Gentiles. God removed the throne, whereon David and his posterity had sat as his substitutes and viceroys, from among the Jews, who renounced his authority, and from earth to heaven; and placing it at his right hand, and setting upon it his Messiah, his only Son, gave him for his subjects, not one nation only, but all nations, and kindreds, and people, and all the ends of the earth for his dominion. That the kingdom of God was in this sense, and in this manner, actually transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles, is too notorious to need any proof. The Jews as a nation rejected the gospel, and persisted in their refusal of the Messiah until the final destruction of their holy city and temple; and what is yet more strange, still persevere in their obstinacy. Whereas the Gentiles embraced it so universally, that within a few centuries after Christ, almost the whole Roman empire, that is, almost all the then known world, forsook idolatry and became Christian. And God, on his part, testified that he entered into covenant with them, and accepted their allegiance, by pouring upon them the gifts of his Holy Spirit; as he signified, on the other hand, his renunciation of the Mosaical covenant, by not only suffering the seat of his empire, the city and temple of Jerusalem, to be utterly destroyed, but permitting the Jews also to be banished from the Holy Land, and scattered through all the nations of the earth. And thus was this prophecy most exactly accomplished in all its parts.

Sect. XXVIII.—Besides the general change in the state of the Jews and Gentiles expressed in this prophecy, many particulars relating to the condition of the Jewish nation were most precisely foretold by our Saviour, Christ; as first, The destruction of the city and temple of Jerusalem; secondly, The signs and wonders preceding that destruction; thirdly, The miseries of the Jews before, at, and after the famous siege of that city; fourthly, The dispersion of that reprobated people; fifthly, The duration of their calamity; and sixthly, Their restoration.

"Our Saviour foretold the destruction of the temple, after it had stood almost five hundred years, in these words, 'Seest thou these great buildings? There shall not be left one stone upon another, which shall not be thrown down,' (Mark, xiii. 2.) And this prediction was completed by Titus,* who, saith Josephus, commanded his soldiers 'to

* See, for this and most of the following articles, Dr Whitby's General Preface, which, together with his other Preface, I would recommend to the perusal of all those who read for the sake of learning the truth, and not for amusement only.

dig up the foundations both of the temple and the city.' And both the Jewish Talmud and Maimonides add, that Terentius Rufus, the captain of his army, did, with a ploughshare, tear up the foundations of the temple.

"With like exactness and particularity did our Lord foretell the ruin of the city of Jerusalem: 'The days,' saith he, 'shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, and shall lay thee even with the ground, and shall not leave thee one stone upon another.' Now, that the event completely answered the prediction, is evident from the Jewish historian, who tells us expressly, that 'Titus having commanded his soldiers to dig up the city, this was so fully done by levelling the whole compass of the city, except three towers, that they who came to see it, were persuaded it would never be built again.' The same historian informs us, that when Vespasian besieged Jerusalem, his army 'compassed the city round about, and kept them in on every side;' and though it was judged a great and almost impracticable work to compass the whole city with a wall, 'yet Titus animating his soldiers to attempt it, they, in three days, built a wall of thirty-nine furlongs, having thirteen castles on it, and so cut off all hopes, that any of the Jews within the city should escape.'

"In the 21st chapter of Saint Luke, Christ, speaking of the destruction of Jerusalem, says, (ver. 11,) 'and great earthquakes shall be in divers places, and famines, and pestilences, and fearful sights, and great signs shall there be from heaven.'

"Now, to omit the frequent earthquakes that happened in other places in the times of Claudius and Nero, Josephus informs us, that there happened in Judea and Jerusalem 'an immense tempest, and vehement winds, with rain, and frequent lightnings, and dreadful thundering, and extreme roarings of the quaking earth, which manifested to all that the world was disturbed at the destruction of men;' and that these prodigies portended no small mischiefs. Josephus hath a particular chapter of the manifest signs of the approaching desolation of the Jews; which Tacitus, a Roman historian of that age, almost epitomizes in these words: 'Armies seemed to meet in the clouds, and glittering weapons were there seen; the temple seemed to be in a flame, with fire issuing from the clouds, and a voice more than human was heard, declaring that the deities were quitting the place; which was attended with the sound of a great motion, as if they were departing.' Josephus adds, what Tacitus also touches upon, that the great gate of the temple, which twenty men could scarcely shut, and which was made fast by bolts and bars, 'was seen to open of its own accord; that a sword appeared hanging over the city; that a comet was seen pointing down upon it for a whole year together; and that before the sun went down, there were seen in the clouds armies in battle array, and chariots compassing the country, and investing the cities,—a thing so strange,' saith he, 'that it would pass for a fable, were there not still men living to attest it.' So particular an account have we of the fearful sights and signs from heaven mentioned by our Lord.

"Our blessed Lord is as express in the prediction of the miseries which should befall that sinful nation; miseries so great as to admit no parallel. 'There shall be,' saith he, 'great tribulation, such as never happened from the beginning of the world to this time,' (Matt. xxiv. 21.) Which words Josephus seems to have transcribed, when he says, 'Never was any nation more wicked, nor ever did a city suffer as they did.' Nay, in another place, he goes so far as to say, 'All the miseries which all mankind had suffered from the beginning of the world, were not to be compared with those the Jewish nation did then suffer.' And indeed, the account he gives of the numbers who perished in that siege is almost incredible; and much more so is what the Talmud and other Jewish writers mention of the slaughter, which Hadrian's army made of them fifty-two years after, when they rebelled under Barchochebas, and were besieged in the city Bitter. And yet our Saviour having farther said, 'That wherever the carcass was (that is, the Jews) there should the eagles, (that is, the Roman armies) be gathered together,' (Matt. xxiv. 28.) they were accordingly harassed and destroyed throughout the Roman empire. 'When,' saith Josephus, 'the Romans had no enemies left in Judea, the danger reached to many of them living the remotest from it;" for many of them perished at Alexandria, at Cyrene, and in other cities of Egypt, to the number of sixty thousand, in all the cities of Syria. In a word, Eleazar, in Josephus, having reckoned many places where they were cruelly slaughtered, concludes with saying, 'It would be too long to speak of all those places in particular.'

"Again, our Saviour adds, 'That they should be led captive into all nations.' Accordingly, Josephus informs us, 'that the number of Jewish captives was ninety-seven thousand;' that of them 'Titus sent many to Egypt, and most of them he dispersed into the Roman provinces;' and so exactly fulfilled this prediction."

The duration of the calamity of the Jews, and their restoration, are signified in these words:

"'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled,' Luke, xxi. 24. This so exactly came to

pass, that Vespasian commanded the whole land of Judea to be sold to those Gentiles that would buy it; and Hadrian, about sixty-three years after, made a law, that 'no Jew should come into the region round about Jerusalem,' as Aristo Pellæus, who was himself a Jew, and flourished in the very time of Hadrian, relates. 'Thus,' saith Eusebius, 'it came to pass that the Jews being banished thence, and there being a conflux thither of aliens, it became a city and colony of the Romans, and was in honour of the emperor (Hadrian) named Ælia.' 'Jerusalem,' saith Christ, 'shall be thus trodden down,'* or subject to the Gentiles, 'till the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled;' that is, till, by the conversion of the Jews to the Christian faith, the fulness of the Gentiles to be converted to it should come in with them: 'For blindness,' saith the apostle, 'hath happened to the Jews, till the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and then all Israel shall be saved,' Rom. xi. 25, 26, and with them also the yet heathen Gentiles. 'For if,' saith he, 'the casting away of the Jews was the reconciling of the world, what shall the receiving of them be to it, but even life from the dead?' Rom. xi. 15. And again, 'If the fall of them were the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more shall their fulness be the fulness of the Gentiles?' Rom. xi. 12. Now, here it is especially observable, that Julian the Apostate designed to defeat this prophecy of Christ, resolved on the rebuilding of the city and the temple of Jerusalem in its old station, which was till his time left in ruins, Ælia being built without the circuit of it. For in his epistle to the community of the Jews, he writes thus: 'The holy city of Jerusalem, which you have so long desired to see inhabited, rebuilding by my own labours, I will dwell in.' This he began with an endeavour to build that temple, in which alone the Jews would offer up their prayers and sacrifices; but the immediate hand of Providence soon forced the workmen to desist from that unhappy enterprise. Ammianus Marcellinus, an heathen, who lived in those very times, gives us the story thus: 'that Julian endeavoured to rebuild the temple at Jerusalem with vast expense, and gave it in charge to Alypius of Antioch to hasten the work, and to the governor of the province to assist him in it; in which work when Alypius was earnestly employed, and the governor of the province was assisting, terrible balls of flame bursting forth near the foundation, with frequent assaults, and burning divers times the workmen, rendered the place inaccessible; and thus the fire obstinately repelling them, the work ceased.'

* The Greek word is πατουμένη, possessed and trodden by the feet of the Gentiles.

"The story is very signal and remarkable for many circumstances: as 1*st*, The persons that relate it,—Ammianus Marcellinus an heathen; Zemuch David a Jew, who confesses that Julian was '*divinitus impeditus*, hindered by God' in this attempt; Nazianzen and Chrysostom among the Greeks; Saint Ambrose and Ruffinus among the Latins, who flourished at the very time when this was done; Theodoret and Sozomen, orthodox historians; Philostorgius an Arian; Socrates a favourer of the Novatians, who wrote the story within the space of fifty years after the thing was done, and whilst the eye-witnesses of the fact were yet surviving.

"2*dly*, The time when it was performed,—not in the reign of Christian emperors, but of the most bitter enemies of Christians, when they were forced to hide, and had not liberty of speaking for themselves. Observe,

"3*dly*, With what confidence Christians urge this matter of fact,—against the Jews, as a convincing demonstration of the expiration of their legal worship, and of the certainty of Christian faith; against the heathen philosophers, inquiring, 'What the wise men of the world can say to these things;' and against the emperor Theodosius, to deter him from requiring them to rebuild a synagogue, which had been lately burnt by a Christian bishop.

"4*thly* and lastly, The unquestionable evidence of the thing,—'This,' say the Christians, 'all men freely do believe and speak of; it is in the mouths of all men, and is not denied even by the atheists themselves; and if it seem incredible to any one, he may repair for the truth of it both to the witnesses of it yet living, and to them who have heard it from their mouths; yea, they may view the foundations lying still bare and naked; and if you ask the reason, you will meet with no other account besides that which I have given; and of this all we Christians are witnesses, these things being done not long since in our own time.' So Saint Chrysostom."

The reader, who is inclined to see many particulars of the predictions of our Saviour, which relate to this remarkable catastrophe, and which I have omitted for brevity's sake, and how they were verified by the event, will do well to consult Dr Whitby's Preface, from whence the above articles are taken.

The observations I have to make on these prophecies are as follow:

1*st*, The common objection made to prophecies in general, that they are so obscure and figurative, as not to be expounded but by the event, cannot be urged against these, which are conceived in words as simple and intelligible as those made use of by the historian, who relates the events corresponding with them.

2*dly*, It is very remarkable, that of the four

evangelists, Saint John alone, who is said to have survived the destruction of Jerusalem, makes no mention either of these prophecies, or their accomplishment. Of the other three, in whose Gospels they are to be found, Saint Matthew and Saint Mark died confessedly before that period; the time of Saint Luke's death is uncertain. May we not then from hence very fairly conclude, that this remarkable silence of the beloved disciple, with regard to prophecies of such importance to the credit of his Lord and his religion, was ordered from above, lest unbelievers should say, what some have said of the predictions of Daniel, that they were written after the event?

3*dly*, As to the prediction relating to the duration of the calamity of the Jewish people, and their restoration, though that is the only one of all those above-cited not yet perfectly accomplished, I beg leave, however, to observe, that not only the miraculous defeating of the Emperor Julian's attempt to rebuild the city and temple of Jerusalem, but the present extraordinary condition of the Jews, is such a warrant and proof that this prophecy also will have its accomplishment in due time, as cannot fail of powerfully striking those who will open their eyes to view it. To induce the unobserving and unthinking people of this age to do this, and to assist them in considering this living evidence of the truth of Christianity which lies within their notice, and even at their very doors, I shall lay before them some observations of an excellent French author* upon this subject, whom I choose rather to translate than to give his arguments in my own words.

Sect. XXIX.—"† But neither the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, nor the general contempt into which they are fallen, are so extraordinary, as their preservation for so many ages, notwithstanding this their dispersion throughout the earth, and the universal contempt which all nations have for them.

"Without a singular providence, a people disunited, and divided into an infinite number of distinct families, banished into countries, whose language and customs were different from theirs, must have been mingled and confounded with other nations, and all traces of them must these many ages past have entirely disappeared. For they not only subsist no longer in a body politic, but there is not a single city where they are allowed to live according to their own laws, or to create magistrates of their own; neither are they held together by any public exercise of their religion. Their priests are without employment, their sacrifices are suppressed. Their feasts cannot be solemnized but in one only place, and to that they are not permitted to repair.

"By what miracle, then, have they been preserved amid so many nations, without any of those means which keep other people united? How comes it to pass, that having been scattered, like so many imperceptible grains of dust, among all nations, they have notwithstanding been able to subsist longer than any, and even to survive the extinction of them all?

"Who can, at this day, pick out the ancient Romans from the numerous crowds of people who have thrown themselves into Italy? Who can point out one single family of old Gaul from those of another original? Who can make the like separation in Spain, between the ancient Spaniards and the Goths who conquered it? The face of the world is changed, both in the east and west; and all nations are mixed and blended in a hundred different manners; it is only upon conjectures, and those oftentimes very frivolous, that a single family can trace up its original beyond the public revolutions of the state.

"But the Jews, by a tradition which no calamity, whether public or private, hath been able to interrupt, can go back as far as the ancient stock of Abraham. They may be mistaken in allotting themselves to this or that tribe, because since their dispersion they have not any public registers; (which, by the way, is a proof that their law is abolished, since neither the priests nor the Levites can ascertain by any certain monuments that they are of the family of Aaron, and of the tribe of Levi:) but every father hath taken care to tell his children, that he had an original different from that of the Gentiles, and that he descended from the patriarchs, who are celebrated in the Scriptures.

"The general contempt into which they have fallen should, one would think, have induced them to confound themselves with those people under whose dominion they lived, and to suppress every thing that tended to distinguish them. By separating themselves from those who were in power, they only drew upon themselves their hatred and derision. In many places they exposed themselves to death, by bearing the exterior mark of circumcision. Every human interest led them to efface the ignominious stain of their original.

"They saw every day their Messiah still farther removed from them; that the promises of their doctors about his speedy manifestation were false; that the predictions of the prophets, whom they could now no longer understand, were covered with obscurity; that all the supputations of time either terminated in Jesus Christ, or were without a period; that

* Principles de la Foy Chrétienne, tom. I. ch. 16.
† See the preceding chapter.

some among them lost all hope, and fell into incredulity, with regard to the Scriptures.

"And yet, notwithstanding all this, they still subsist, they multiply, they remain visibly separated from all other people; and in spite of the general aversion, in spite of the efforts of all those nations who hate them, and who have them in their power, in spite of every obstacle, they are preserved by a supernatural protection, which hath not in like manner preserved any other nation of the earth.

"One must surely have very little sense of what ought to give one astonishment and admiration, if this prodigy does not strike one; and one must have a strange idea of the providence of God, to think he had no hand in all this.

"But the Holy Spirit was not willing to leave us under any uncertainty upon this head; and hath declared to us by his prophets, that the preservation of the Jews is his work. 'Fear thou not, O Jacob, my servant, saith the Lord, for I am with thee; for I will make a full end of all the nations whither I have driven thee; but I will not make a full end of thee, but correct thee in measure; yet will I not leave thee wholly unpunished,' (Jerem. xlvi. 28.)

"This promise was made to the old patriarchs, to whom God hath reserved children, heirs of their faith, and to the remnant of Israel, who in the end of the ages shall believe in Jesus Christ.

"It is not for their sakes that the unworthy posterity of the unbelieving is suffered; and it is to maintain the communication between the first fathers and their latest successors, that the nation is preserved notwithstanding their iniquity, and in the midst of punishments that threatened to overwhelm them.

"But let it be observed, that this promise was made to the nation of the Jews only; and all others shall be either exterminated, or so confounded with each other, as to be no longer distinguished; and that it is the efficacy of the word of God which preserves the Jews amidst every thing that in all appearance would otherwise have sunk them entirely, and swallowed them up.

"'Thus saith the Lord, If my covenant be not with day and night, and if I have not appointed the ordinances of heaven and earth; then will I cast away the seed of Jacob, and David my servant; for I will cause their captivity to return, and have mercy on them,' (Jerem. xxxiii. 25, 26.) This, I say, is the promise, and the end of the promise. The Jews shall one day be recalled through mercy; and for the sake of those who shall one day be recalled, the patience of God suffers all the rest, and his power preserves them.

"'Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; the Lord of Hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me for ever. Thus saith the Lord, If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel, for all that they have done, saith the Lord,' (Jer. xxxi. 35, 36, 37.)

"That is to say, heaven and earth shall pass away sooner than the Jews shall cease to be a distinct people. The same power which hath given laws to nature, watches over their preservation. And the unheard-of crime which they have committed, in crucifying the Saviour promised to their fathers, and which hath filled up the measure of their former iniquity, will not move God to retract his promise, and reject entirely, and without resource, the posterity of Jacob.

"With what light were the prophets illuminated to presume to speak in so great and lofty a strain of a thing so little probable as the duration of a people weak, dispersed, universally hated, and guilty of the greatest of all crimes?

"Who would question the other prophecies, after seeing the accomplishment of this! What more astonishing proof can any one desire of the truth of the Christian religion, than these two events joined together, the dispersion of the Jews into all nations, and their preservation for sixteen hundred years? One of these things taken separately and by itself was incredible; and they became still more so by being united; but both these prodigies were necessary to prove that Jesus Christ was the Messiah.

"It was necessary that those who had rejected him, should be banished into all regions, should into all parts carry with them the Scriptures, and should every where be covered with ignominy.

"But that the promises made their fathers might be accomplished, it was necessary that their banished family should be recalled, and that, their blindness being dissipated, they should adore him, whom Abraham had desired to see, (John, viii. 56,) and whom he had adored with a holy transport of joy and gratitude.

"The Jews, punished and dispersed, bear witness to Jesus Christ. The Jews, recalled and converted, will render him a testimony still more awful and striking. The Jews, preserved by a continual miracle, that they may preserve to Jesus Christ the stock and succession of those who shall one day believe in him, bear witness to him continually.

"Had they been only punished, they would have proved his justice only. Had they only been preserved, they could have proved no-

thing but his power. Had they not been reserved to worship him one day, they could not have proved his mercy and fidelity, nor have made him any reparation for their outrageous crimes.

"Their dispersion proves that he is come, but they have rejected him: their preservation demonstrates that he hath not rejected them for ever, and that they shall one day believe in him; and they declare by both that he is the Messiah, and the promised Saviour; that their miseries proceed from their not having known him, and that the only hope they have left is, that they shall one day come to the knowledge of him.

"We ought not to demand, why God supports them so long without enlightening them; and why he leaves so great an interval between the faithful fathers and the children that will hereafter become so too. To pretend to examine the impenetrable judgments of God, and the abysses of his wisdom, is to pretend 'to measure the height of heaven, and to search out the foundations of the earth,' God hath set bounds to the incredulity of the Jews, and to the ingratitude of the Gentiles, (Rom. xi. 32, 33:) his mercy and his justice succeed each other; and no one knows at what time he will execute what he hath promised to the latest posterity of Israel, although his promises are infallible.

"'Thus saith the Lord that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not; for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee. When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.—Fear not, for I am with thee; I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west. I will say to the north, Give up; and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth: even every one that is called by my name. For I have created him for my glory, I have formed him, yea I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears.' (Isa. xliii. 1—8.)

"This prophecy, truly admirable in all its parts, is addressed to Jacob, the head of the tribes of Israel, and the heir of the promises of the Messiah and salvation.

"His posterity is dispersed into all the quarters of the world. This is the state of the Jews since the coming of Jesus Christ.

"Their dispersion is the punishment of their spiritual deafness and blindness. And with how great a blindness, with how great a deafness may one not deservedly reproach the Jews, for not having known Jesus Christ, and not having heard him, though he proved his divine mission by an infinity of miracles!

"Their condition seems desperate: the waters are ready to overwhelm them; the flames surround them on all sides: but the protection of God follows them throughout, and delivers them.

"This protection is vouchsafed to the whole body of the nation, in favour of those who shall one day call upon that name, which the rest have dishonoured with their blasphemies.

"God, out of mere mercy, will give a docile and faithful heart to those who shall renounce their former incredulity. They will be the creatures of his grace, to which alone they will stand indebted for their repentance and return.

"They will not then begin to see a new object, but an object which their blindness had concealed from them. They will not then hear a teacher, who began but a few days before to make his appearance, but one whom their voluntary and obstinate deafness had kept them from hearing before.

"The change will be in their persons, and not in his religion; that will remain what it is, but they will then begin to see it. Jesus Christ will take away the veil that is upon their eyes; but he will be the same. He will cure their deafness; but he will speak the same things.

"It is evident, then, that the Jews are preserved for him; and that the whole body of the nation subsists only by the efficacy of that promise, which is to lead the remains of Israel to Jesus Christ: "Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the deaf that have ears."

Can any one, after reading these several prophecies above quoted, question the veracity of the sacred writers; who, by publishing them in this manner, put their master's credit and their own upon contingencies very remote, and seemingly improbable? And doth not the exact accomplishment of these, and several other predictions, which might have been produced, sufficiently establish the authority of the Scriptures, and ascertain the truth of all the facts related in them?

Sect. XXX.—I come now to consider the second argument to induce us to believe that Christ rose from the dead, namely, the existence of the Christian religion.

From the existence of the Christian religion, may be drawn the same kind of evidence of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the wonders attending it, as is exhibited to us of the Deluge by the many petrifactions of shells, and bones of fishes, and other animals of distant regions, &c. found often in the bottoms of the deepest mines, and the bowels of the highest mountains; for, as it is impossible to account for those various petrifactions being lodged in so many parts of the earth, some many leagues distant from the sea, others

very much above the level of it, without admitting such a subversion and confusion of this globe, as could not have been occasioned by a less violent cause than the "breaking up the fountains of the great deep," and the "waters flowing above the tops of the highest hills;" so will it, I apprehend, be extremely difficult to account for the propagation and present existence of Christianity in so many regions of the world, without supposing that Christ rose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and enabled his disciples, by the miraculous gifts of his Holy Spirit, to surmount such obstacles as no mere human abilities could possibly overcome. In the former case, a cause superior to the ordinary operations of nature must be assigned for the production of effects plainly above, and contrary to, those operations: and for a solution of the latter, recourse in like manner must be had to an agent of power and wisdom transcending and controlling the natural faculties and wisdom of man; and this cause, this agent, can be no other than the great Lawgiver of nature, the All-wise and Almighty Creator of heaven and earth. He alone could "break up the fountains of the great deep, open the windows of heaven, and cover the whole earth with water;" that is, bring on that universal deluge which alone furnishes us with a solution of many phenomena, otherwise unaccountable: and he alone could break the jaws of death, and the prison of the grave, open the kingdom of heaven, and shower down upon mortals such mighty gifts and powers, as are the only adequate causes that can be assigned of the astonishing and preternatural birth and increase of Christianity. This will not appear exaggerated, if we consider the difficulties the gospel had to struggle with at its first appearance, and the inabilities, the human inabilities I mean, of its first preachers, to oppose and overcome those obstacles.

The difficulties they had to encounter were no less than the superstition, the prejudices, and the vices of the whole world; difficulties of so much the harder conquest, as being derived, though by corruption, from good principles; namely, the religion, the nature, and the reason of mankind. How powerful an opposition all these formed against the gospel, will best appear from a short view of the state of the world under the first ages of Christianity.

The Jews, though possessed of a body of laws, framed, as they acknowledged, by God himself, had, however, by listening to the comments and traditions of their scholastic and casuistical scribes and rabbins, so far departed from the spirit and intention of their Lawgiver, as to place almost the whole of their religion in the observance of ritual purities and ceremonies, to the neglect of the "greater and weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith," which, as our Saviour told them, they ought to have regarded, and not to have disregarded the others, (Matt. xxiii. 23:) that is, the Jews were fallen from true religion into a superstition, which differed from that of the Gentiles principally in that the Gentiles worshipped a number of deities, the Jews acknowledged and worshipped one alone; but still they worshipped him superstitiously, with exterior services only, ablutions, sacrifices, observation of days, and other ceremonial duties; not perceiving, or not remembering, the great and wise end of those ceremonial institutions; which, by not allowing any forms of worship but those prescribed by the law, and not admitting to that worship any but those who, by circumcision, would become perfect Israelites, not only tended to keep them from being mingled with the Gentiles, and learning from them their idolatrous polytheism, by which means that fundamental article of all true religion, the belief of one God, though lost in all other nations, was for many centuries preserved among the Jews; but by the fasts and festivals, the purifications, offerings, and propitiatory sacrifices appointed in the ritual, put them perpetually in mind of the duties of prayer and thanksgiving to God; of the importance of moral purity, the obligation of repentance, and the necessity of an expiation for sin. But as holiness of life was of more difficult practice than the observation of ceremonies, numerous and burdensome as they seem to have been, they soon became willing to commute; and reposing their chief hopes of obtaining the favour and protection of God in their compliance with the ceremonial law, they turned their attention principally to that; and attached themselves to it so strongly, that though they did not scruple to commit a thousand immoralities, they would sooner die than eat any unclean meats, or suffer their temple to be profaned.

From this attachment to what they esteemed the law of Moses, they presumed upon the special favour and protection of God, and looked upon themselves as sole heirs of the promises made to Abraham and David, and repeated and confirmed by all their prophets. But the same blindness that withheld them from seeing the spiritual intent and meaning of the ceremonial institutions, kept them likewise from understanding the spiritual sense of those prophecies. The blessing, therefore, promised through the seed of Abraham to "all the nations of the earth," and the kingdom stipulated to the "posterity of David," they preposterously interpreted to belong to themselves alone; and expounding the deliverance of Israel intimated by the prophets, and the victories and dominion of the son of David, in a carnal sense, they expected, at the time of Christ's coming, a

Messiah, who should not only deliver them from their subjection to the Romans, but even conquer and subdue them, and all the other powers of the earth to the empire of the Jews, the sole favourites of Heaven, and destined lords of the universe, under their invincible glorious King. These expectations, so flattering to the whole nation, had so infected the minds of all orders and degrees, that even the disciples of Jesus, who were (some of them at least) of the lowest of the people, were a long while tainted with them, notwithstanding the spiritual instructions and plain declarations of their master to the contrary. And though, soon after his ascension, they seem to have given up all thoughts of a temporal kingdom, yet could they not for some time, nor without an express miracle, be convinced that the Gentiles had any title to the mercies of God, or any share in the kingdom of the Messiah. Such was the superstition, and such the prejudices of the whole Jewish nation.

To these national prejudices may be added others, arising from the peculiar tenets of the different sects that divided among them almost the whole people of the Jews. The most powerful of these were the Pharisees and Sadducees: of whose chief doctrines some notice is taken by the evangelists, as well as of their rancorous opposition to the gospel of Christ. The reader, who is desirous of seeing a more particular account of the opinions of these, and the other sects, may consult the Universal History.* It may be sufficient to observe here, that they had all of them many followers, had great authority with the people, and had, especially the Pharisees, a large share in the government of the Jewish state. And though there was a constant hatred and rivalry between them, and consequently so great a zeal in each for the advancement of their particular opinions, that they "would compass heaven and earth to gain one proselyte," yet they all agreed with the same ardour to oppose the progress of Christianity.

The idolatrous superstitions of the heathen world, and the zealous attachment of every nation and city to the worship of their respective tutelary deities, are too well known to be enlarged upon in this place: but I must observe, that besides the prejudices of the ignorant and bigoted multitude, there sprung up from these superstitions other obstacles to Christianity no less formidable, though of a different kind: for many religious rites and ceremonies having, either by prescription, or the policy of legislators, been mixed and interwoven with the administration of civil affairs, the worship of the gods was become not only an essential part of the constitution, but the great engine of government in most states and kingdoms. Thus, among the Greeks and other nations, omens and oracles, among the Romans, auspices, auguries, and sacrifices, either of thanksgiving, or propitiation, were often very successfully employed upon great and important occasions: on which account, all the Roman emperors, who had appropriated to themselves the authority of the whole empire, formerly divided among several officers, after the examples of Julius Cæsar and Augustus, either actually took upon them the office, or at least the title of *Pontifex Maximus*, chief priest; that is, according to the definition of Festus, *judex atque arbiter rerum humanarum divinarumque*, the judge and arbitrator of human and divine affairs. And hence those wise, as well as humane emperors, Trajan, and the two Antonines, might possibly think themselves under a double obligation, as chief magistrates and chief priests, of persecuting the Christians, whom they apparently considered as innovators with regard to the constitution, as well as religion of the empire. This, though no sufficient excuse for such barbarous and inhuman proceedings, may serve, however, to lessen the astonishment we are apt to fall into, upon hearing that so virtuous a religion as that of the Christians, was persecuted by so virtuous a prince as Antoninus the philosopher; though it must at the same time be acknowledged, that there was in him a great mixture of superstition, however incompatible that is thought to be with philosophy. This may also serve to shew us the distressful situation of Christianity, against whose progress not only the superstitious zeal of the multitude, the laws and policy of almost every state and kingdom, but the seeming duty of even good and just magistrates were fatally combined.

If to politic and pious princes, religion and the laws of the state might serve for a reason or pretence for opposing Christianity, to wicked emperors there was yet another motive distinct from any consideration either of duty or policy, or even of their vices; and that was, their own divinity. After all the power and dignity of the Roman people, and their several magistrates, was devolved upon the single person of the emperor, the senators, by a transition natural enough to slaves, from counsellors becoming flatterers, had not only established by law the absolute authority of their tyrants, but so far consecrated their persons, even in their lifetime, as to erect altars to their names, to place their statues among those of the gods, and to offer to them sacrifices and incense. Though these impious honours were conferred upon all alike, without any distinction of good or bad, yet the latter, not being able from their own merit to acquire to themselves any respect or veneration, had nothing to stand upon but the power and prerogatives of their office; of

* Vol. iv. p. 109. *et seq.*

which therefore they became so jealous, as to make it dangerous for any one to neglect paying them those outward honours, however extravagant and profane, which either the laws, or their own mad pride required. And hence, adoring the image of the emperors, swearing by their names, &c. became a mark and test of fidelity, with which all who sought their favour, or feared their power, most religiously complied; all those especially who held any magistracy under them, or governed the provinces. And these, by their offices, were yet farther obliged to take care, that within the limits of their jurisdiction, that most essential part of the duty of subjects to bad princes, exterior respect and veneration, was most punctually paid. Now, as the doctrines of Christ were entirely opposite to all kinds of idolatry, Christians were by this test, with which they could by no means comply, rendered liable to the guilt of that kind of treason, which tyrants and their ministers never pardon, how apt soever they may be to overlook crimes against religion or the state. And that this test was, among others, made use of against the professors of Christianity, even in the best reigns, is evident from a passage in the famous epistle of Pliny to Trajan, in which he relates his manner of proceeding with those who offered to clear themselves of the charge or suspicion of being Christians, in the following words: * "Propositus est libellus sine autore, multorum nomina continens, qui negant se esse Christianos, aut fuisse: cùm præeunte me Deos appellarent, et imagini tuæ (quam propter hoc jusseram cum simulacris numinum afferri) thure ac vino supplicarent; præterea maledicerent Christo; quorum nihil cogi posse dicuntur, qui sunt revera Christiani. Ergo dimittendos putavi. Alii ab indice nominati, esse se Christianos dixerunt, et mox negaverunt; fuisse quidem, sed desiisse; quidam ante triennium, quidam ante plures annos: non nemo etiam ante viginti quoque. Omes et imaginem tuam, deorumque simulacra venerati sunt; ii et Christo maledixerunt." — "A paper was set forth, without a name, containing a list of many people, who denied that they either were, or ever had been Christians. Now these persons having, after my example, invocated the gods, and with wine and incense paid their devotions to your image (which I had caused to be brought forth for that purpose, with the images of the gods) and having moreover blasphemed Christ, (any one of which things, it is said, no real Christian can be compelled to do,) I thought proper to dismiss them. Others, who had been informed against, confessed that they were once Christians, but denied their being so now, saying they had quitted that religion, some three years, others more, and some few even twenty years ago. All these worshipped both your image, and those of the gods, and did also blaspheme Christ."

* Epist. xcvii. l. 10.

To these powerful patrons of superstition, and enemies of the gospel, may be added others, whose authority, though inferior and subservient to the former, at least within the limits of the Roman empire, was, however, of very great and extensive influence,—I mean the priests, diviners, augurs, and managers of oracles, with all the subordinate attendants upon the temples and worship of almost an infinite number of deities; and many trades, if not entirely depending upon that worship, yet very much encouraged and enriched by it, such as statuaries, shrine-makers, breeders of victims, dealers in frankincense, &c. All of whom were by interest, to say nothing of religion, strongly devoted to idolatry.

It may not be improper also, under the article of religion, to mention the Circensian, and other spectacles exhibited among the Romans, the four great games of Greece, the Olympian, Pythian, Isthmian and Nemean, with many others of the same kind, celebrated with great magnificence in every country, and almost in every city of Greece, both in Europe and Asia; all of which were so many religious festivals, which, by the allurements of pomp and pleasure, not to mention the glory and advantages acquired by the conquerors in those games, attached many to the cause of superstition.

But superstition, universal and powerful as it was, by its union with the interests and pleasures of a considerable part of mankind, was not the only nor the greatest obstacle that Christianity had to contend with. Vice leagued against it a still greater number. The ambitious and luxurious, the debauched and lewd, the miser and extortioner, the unjust and oppressive, the proud and the revengeful, the fraudulent and rapacious, were all foes to a religion, that taught humility and moderation, temperance and purity even of thought, liberality and clemency, justice, benevolence, and meekness, the forgiving of injuries, and "the doing that only to others, which we would have them to do to us." Virtues agreeable indeed to reason, and discoverable in part by the clear light of nature; but the difficulty lay in bringing those to hear reason, who had abandoned themselves to superstition. And how was the almost extinguished ray of nature to be perceived, among the many false and glaring lights of religion, opinion, and philosophy, which recommended and sanctified many enormous vices? The gods, like dissolute and despotic princes, who have often been very properly compared to them, were themselves the great patrons and examples of tyranny, lewdness, and revenge, and almost all kinds of vice.

Opinion had magnified Alexander, and deified Julius Cæsar, for an ambition which ought to have rendered them the objects of the detestation and curses of all mankind.

Neither was philosophy so great a friend to virtue, or enemy to vice, as she pretended to be. Some philosophers, on the contrary, denied the being, at least the providence, of God, and future rewards and punishments, and as a just consequence of that opinion, placed the felicity of mankind in the enjoyments of this world, that is, in sensual pleasures. Others, affecting to doubt and question every thing, took away the distinction of virtue and vice, and left their disciples to follow either, as their inclination directed. These were, at least indirectly, preachers of vice. And among those who undertook to lead their disciples to the temple of virtue, there were so many different, and even inconsistent opinions, some of them so paradoxical and absurd, others so subtilized and mysterious, and all of them so erroneous in their first principles, and so defective in many great points of religion and morality, that it is no wonder that Philosophy, however venerable in her original, and noble in her pretensions, degenerated into speculation, sophistry, and a science of disputation, and, from a guide of life, became a pedantic president of the schools, from whence arose another kind of adversaries to the gospel,—a set of men who, from seeing farther than the vulgar, came to fancy they could see every thing, and to think every thing subject to the discussion of reason; and carrying their inquiries into the nature of God, the production of the universe, and the essence of the human soul, either framed upon each of these, or adopted, some quaint or mysterious system, by which they pretended to account for all the operations of nature, and measure all the actions of God and man. And as every sect had a system peculiar to itself, so did each endeavour to advance their own upon the ruins of all the rest; and this engaged them in a perpetual war with one another; in which, for want of real strength and solid arguments, they were reduced to defend themselves and attack their adversaries with all those arts, which are commonly made use of to cover or supply the deficiency of sense and reason,—sophistry, declamation, and ridicule, obstinacy, pride, and rancour. Men of this turn, accustomed to reason upon topics, in which reason is bewildered—so proud of the sufficiency of reason, as to think they could account for every thing—so fond of their own systems, as to dread conviction more than error, and so habituated to dispute pertinaciously, to assert boldly, and to decide magisterially upon every question, that they were almost incapable of any instruction, could not but be averse to the receiving for their master a crucified Jew, and for teachers a parcel of low obscure persons of the same nation, who professed to "glory in the cross of Christ, to know nothing but him crucified," and to neglect and despise the so much admired wisdom of this world; and who, moreover, taught points never thought of by the philosophers, such as the redemption of mankind, and the resurrection of the dead, and who, though far from forbidding the due exercise of reason, yet confined it within its proper bounds, and exhorted their disciples to submit with all humility, and to rely with all confidence upon the wisdom of God, instead of pretending to arraign His proceedings, whose judgments are unsearchable, and whose ways are past finding out.

From this view of the Jewish and Gentile world, it is evident that every thing that most strongly influences and tyrannizes over the mind of man,—religion, custom, law, policy, pride, interest, vice, and even philosophy, was united against the Gospel; enemies in their own nature very formidable and difficult to be subdued, had they even suffered themselves to be attacked upon equal ground, and come to a fair engagement. But not relying upon their own strength only, (for prejudice and falsehood are always diffident and fearful,) they intrenched themselves behind that power which they were in possession of, and rendered themselves inaccessible, as they imagined, to Christianity, by planting round them not only all kinds of civil discouragements, but even torments, chains, and death; terrors which no one could despise, who had any views of ambition or interest, and who was not even contented to resign, what he might otherwise have enjoyed in peace, and without a crime,—his reputation, his ease, his fortune, and his life. These were the difficulties which Christianity had to struggle with for many ages, and over which she at length so far prevailed as to change the whole face of things, overturn the temples and altars of the gods, silence the oracles, humble the impious pride of emperors, those earthly and more powerful deities, confound the presumptuous wisdom of philosophers, and introduce into the greatest part of the known world a new principle of religion and virtue,—an event apparently too unwieldy and stupendous to have been brought about by mere human means, though all the accomplishments of learning, all the insinuating and persuasive powers of eloquence, joined to the profoundest knowledge of the nature and duty of man, and a long practice and experience in the ways of the world, had all met in the apostles. But the apostles, excepting Paul, were ignorant and illiterate, bred up for the most part in mean occupations, natives and inhabitants of a remote province of Judea, and sprung from a nation hated and despised by the rest of mankind. So that, allowing it possible that

a change so total and universal might have been effected by the natural powers and faculties of man, yet had the apostles none of those powers, Saint Paul alone excepted, who was indeed eloquent and well versed in all the learning of the Jews, that is, in the traditions and doctrines of the pharisees, of which sect he was,—a learning which, instead of assisting him in making converts to the gospel, gave him the strongest prejudices against it, and rendered him a furious persecutor of the Christians. Yet of this eloquence, and of this learning, he made no use in preaching the gospel; on the contrary, "when I came to you," (says he to the Corinthians,) "I came not with excellency of speech, or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God; for I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified: And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling; and my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom," 1 Cor. ii. 1—4. And in the preceding chapter, comparing the insufficiency of the preachers of the gospel with the success of their preaching, he attributes the latter to the true cause, the wisdom and power of God, in these expressive words: "For Christ sent me to preach the gospel, not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect. For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us who are saved it is the power of God. For it is written, (Isaiah, xxix. 14,) I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and will bring to nothing the understanding of the prudent. Where is the wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the disputer of this world? Hath not God made foolish the wisdom of this world! For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe. For the Jews require a sign, and the Greeks seek after wisdom. But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolishness; but unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God. Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men: For ye see your calling, brethren, that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen; yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are, that no flesh should glory in his presence," 1 Cor. i. 17—29.

This is a true representation of the condition of the first preachers of the gospel, and their opposers. The latter were possessed of all the wisdom, authority, and power of the world; the former were ignorant, contemptible, and weak. Which of them, then, according to the natural course of human affairs, ought to have prevailed? The latter, without all doubt. And yet not the apostle only, but all history and our own experience assure us, that the ignorant, the contemptible, and the weak, gained the victory from the wise, the mighty, and the noble. To what other cause, then, can we attribute a success so contrary to all the laws by which the events of this world are governed, than to the interposition of God, manifested in the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, and the miraculous powers conferred upon his apostles and disciples? A cause adequate to all the effects, however great and astonishing. For, with these ample credentials from the King of heaven, even a poor fisherman of Galilee might appear with dignity before the high priest and Sanhedrim of the Jews, assert boldly that "God had made that same Jesus, whom they had crucified, both Lord and Christ;" and make good his assertion by proving, that he was risen from the dead, strange and supernatural as it might seem, not only by his own testimony, and that of his brethren the apostles and disciples of Jesus, by whom he was seen "for forty days after his passion," but by innumerable instances of a power, superior in like manner to nature, derived upon them from him, and exercised by them in his name. From the Scriptures also might the same ignorant and illiterate Galileans shew, against the traditions of the elders, the learning of the scribes, and the prejudices of the whole Jewish nation, that the humble suffering Jesus was the mighty triumphant Messiah spoken of by the prophets; since if, with reference to the interpretation of those prophecies, any doubt could have arisen among the people to whose expositions they should submit, to those of the scribes and elders, or those of the apostles, the latter had to produce, in support of their authority, the attestation of that Holy Spirit, by whom those prophets were inspired, now speaking through their mouths in all the languages of the earth. And with regard to that other point, of still harder digestion to the Jews, namely, the calling the uncircumcised Gentiles to an equal participation of the kingdom of God, and consequently the abolishing circumcision, and the whole ceremonial law, the apostles were furnished with an argument, to which all the rabbins were not able to reply; by the Holy Ghost bestowing upon the Gentile converts to Christianity the same heavenly gifts as he had conferred at the beginning upon the believing Jews.

Invested with such full powers from on

high, might these same obscure Jews, notwithstanding the contempt and hatred which all other nations had for that people, undertake and accomplish the arduous and amazing task of preaching the gospel to all the world. The belief of one God is the fundamental article of all true religion; and the unity of the Godhead is certainly discoverable, and even to be demonstrated by reason. But this article of belief (as I have said before) was not to be found in the religion of any nation besides the Jews; and long arguments and deductions of reason, by which it was to be demonstrated, were above the capacity of the greatest part of mankind. To prove this important truth, therefore, in a manner easy to be comprehended by the weakest, and yet not to be refuted by the strongest understanding, the apostles and their followers were for many ages endowed, besides all their other miraculous gifts, with a power over devils or demons, (the only deities of the pagans that had any real being,) permitted perhaps to shew themselves at that time in extraordinary operations, for the sake of illustrating and proving this great truth. By this power they cast them out of many who were possessed by them, drove them from their temples, groves, and oracles, obliged them to confess their own inferiority, to acknowledge the dominion of Jesus Christ, and to declare his apostles to be "the servants of the most high God," sent to "shew mankind the way of salvation."* This power they exercised in the name of Jesus Christ, in order to prove his mediation and intercession between God and man, the second article of the Christian creed. And as by this power, thus exercised in the name of Christ, the apostles and their followers were enabled to prove, even to the senses of all mankind, that there is but one God, and one Mediator; so, from that and other miraculous gifts of the Holy Spirit, healing all manner of diseases, speaking with various tongues, prophesying, &c. did they derive to themselves authority to teach the great doctrines of Christianity,—repentance, remission of sins, holiness of life, future rewards and punishments, and the resurrection of the dead,—of which last, the resurrection of Christ was both an instance and a pledge; as the effusion of the Holy Ghost upon believers was a clear evidence of the efficacy of repentance, and the remission of their sins. And of the necessity of a holy life, and the certainty of future rewards and punishments, nothing could afford a stronger and more convincing argument, than the lives and deaths of these ambassadors of God, who were apparently guided into all truth by his inspiration; and who, upon the assurance of a blessed immortality, not only practised all the virtues they preached, but cheerfully underwent all kinds of sufferings, and even death itself.

After this manner were the first preachers of the Gospel, weak, ignorant, and contemptible as they were, furnished with strength sufficient to overthrow the "strongholds of Satan," the superstitions, prejudices, and vices of mankind; and by the "demonstration of the power of God," an argument whose conclusiveness was visible to the dullest capacity, enabled to confound the subtilties of the most disputatious, and surpass the wisdom of the wisest philosophers, in establishing religion upon the belief of one God, grounding the obligation to virtue upon its true principle, the command of God; and deriving the encouragement to holiness of life from the promises of God, to reward those who should obey his will with eternal happiness, obtained by the sacrifice and mediation of Jesus Christ. Which last point, together with the doctrine of providence, the free agency of man, and assisting grace, how much soever beyond the ken of reason, yet could not but be admitted by all reasonable men for certain truths, as standing upon the authority of persons visibly commissioned and inspired by God. For what conclusion of reason, what maxim in philosophy is more evident, than that men speaking by the immediate inspiration of God, cannot lie? And is not the divine inspiration of the apostles to be inferred with as much certainty, from the mighty wonders they performed, as the divine creation of the world from the stupendous beauty, order, and magnificence of the universe? Every effect must have a cause; and a supernatural effect must have a cause superior to nature; and this cause can be no other than God. There may be, indeed, and we are authorized by the Scriptures to say there are, many beings both good and bad, endued with faculties and powers exceeding those of man; but these beings are, doubtless, limited as well as man in the exercise of those powers, and subject to laws prescribed to them by their great Creator, which, in respect to them, may be likewise styled the laws of nature. From whence it follows, that they cannot break in upon or disturb the laws of any other system of creatures, though inferior to them, without the permission of the Universal King, who, nevertheless, may certainly make use of them as instruments to bring about his wise purposes, even beyond the bounds of their proper spheres. Thus, in establishing Christianity, he thought fit to employ the ministration not of angels only, but of demons, though in such a manner as to leave no doubt of their subjection to his sovereignty. The angels were, upon many occasions, assisting to Christ and his apostles; the demons trembled, and fled at their command; and both of them, those

* Acts, xvi. 17. See, for many other instances, Whitby's General Preface to the Epistles.

by their subserviency, and these by the servility of their obedience, manifestly declared Christ and his apostles to be vested with an authority and power derived from their Lord and King. So that mankind, seeing the apostles possessed of a power plainly paramount to the powers of all other known beings, whether angels or demons, could no more question their being commissioned and inspired by God, than doubt whether the magnificent frame of the universe, with all the various natures belonging to it, was the workmanship of his almighty hands.

Thus by arguing from effects, notorious and visible effects, to causes, the surest method of investigating and proving some kinds of truths, I have endeavoured to demonstrate (if I may so speak without offence) the certainty of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, upon which the whole system of Christianity depends. For if Christ is not risen from the dead, then, as Saint Paul says, vain is the hope of Christians, and the preaching of the apostles vain; nay, we may go still farther, and pronounce vain the preaching of Christ himself. For had he not risen, and proved himself by many infallible tokens to have risen from the dead, the apostles and disciples could have had no inducement to believe in him, that is, to acknowledge him for the Messiah, the Anointed of God: on the contrary, they must have taken him for an impostor, and under that persuasion could never have become preachers of the gospel, without becoming enthusiasts or impostors; in either of which characters it is impossible they should have succeeded, to the degree which we are assured they did, considering their natural insufficiency, the strong opposition of all the world to the doctrines of Christianity, and their own high pretensions to miraculous powers, about which they could neither have been deceived themselves, nor have deceived others. Supposing, therefore, that Christ did not rise from the dead, it is certain, according to all human probability, there could never have been any such thing at all as Christianity, or it must have been stifled soon after its birth. But we know, on the contrary, that Christianity hath already existed above seventeen hundred years. This is a fact about which there is no dispute, but Christians and infidels disagree in accounting for this fact. Christians affirm their religion to be of divine original, and to have grown up and prevailed under the miraculous assistance and protection of God; and this they not only affirm and offer to prove by the same kind of evidence by which all remote facts are proved, but think it may very fairly be inferred from the wonderful circumstances of its growth and increase, and its present existence. Infidels, on the other hand, assert Christianity to be an imposture, invented and carried on by men. In the maintenance of which assertion their great argument against the credibility of the resurrection, and the other miraculous proofs of the divine original of the gospel, founded in their being miraculous—that is, out of the ordinary course of nature—will be of no service to them, since they will still find a miracle in their way, namely, the amazing birth, growth, and increase of Christianity. Which facts, though they should not be able to account for them, they cannot however deny. In order, therefore, to destroy the evidence drawn from them by Christians, they must prove them not to have been miraculous, by shewing how they could have been effected in the natural course of human affairs, by such weak instruments as Christ and his apostles, (taking them to be what they are pleased to call them, enthusiasts or impostors,) and by such means as they were possessed of and employed. But this I imagine to be as much above the capacity of the greatest philosophers to shew, as it is to prove the possibility of executing the proud boast of Archimedes (even granting his postulatum) of moving and wielding the globe of this earth, by machines of human invention, and composed of such materials only as nature furnishes for the ordinary use of man.

DATE DUE

MAY 20 '71
4/28/78

GAYLORD

PRINTED IN U.S.A.

CENTRAL BAPTIST THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
0 0021 0023124 6

227.092
L996W

Lyttelton, George L.
AUTHOR

Lord Lyttleton (sic) on the conver-
TITLE sion of St. Paul.

21612
Date Due | Borrower's Name

227.092
L996W Lyttelton, George L.
Lord Lyttleton (sic) on
the conversion of St. Paul.

21612